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Employee Engagement in Antigua and Barbuda Broadcasting Services

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Jrucilla B. Samuel

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Employee Engagement in Antigua and Barbuda Broadcasting Services

by

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MBA, University of Wales, 2013

BA, University of the West Indies, 2001

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2020

Abstract

Employee engagement is a direct threat to business survival. The strategic development of sustainable engagement initiatives results in employee well-being and also mitigates against organizational collapse. Grounded in the conceptual frameworks of employee engagement theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, and Kahn's theory of personal engagement, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the motivational strategies some media leaders use to keep employees engaged. The participants comprised 5 media leaders in Antigua and Barbuda with at least 2 years' experience in successful employee engagement. Data were collected in person via semistructured interviews and documents from the media entity were reviewed. During the analysis of the data, 3 themes emerged: flexible leadership, organizational training, and recognition and appreciation. A key recommendation includes prioritizing comprehensive training for all employees to build engagement. The implications for positive social change include the potential for business leaders to enhance the general welfare of employees and increase human capital, as well as implement corporate social responsibility initiatives for the wider community.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my ever-supporting mother and daughter.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me the strength to persevere. I would also like to thank all the members of my family, particularly my daughter Corzette and my mother Juanita, who encouraged me tremendously during this challenging DBA journey. Your support and love will forever be remembered. I would also like to thank my chair, Dr. Frank Bearden, for his patience and valuable assistance. Thank you for answering the plethora of questions in the discussion forums. Many thanks also to my 2nd committee member, Dr. Janet Booker, for her sound advice and encouraging words and my URR, Dr. Judith Blando, for her eagle eye. It was a privilege to have benefited from your service. And thank you Walden for offering your service to developing countries like Antigua & Barbuda and for letting possibilities become realizations.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Background of the Problem

Despite a substantial body of literature on improving employee motivation, productivity, and welfare (Da Costa & Loureiro, 2019; Shaik & Makhecha, 2019; Sun, 2019; Tanwar, 2017), employee engagement remains elusive worldwide. Statistics from the Gallup Institute highlighted that 85% of the global workforce are neither engaged nor actively engaged (Motyka, 2018). Disengagement is still a major challenge for the corporate sector, but engagement is a vital counteractive and strategic tool that attracts, motivates, and retains employees for superior business results (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Employee engagement is indicative of business success (Rekha & Sasmita, 2019).

Effective leaders are aware that business growth and survival result from committed and innovative employees (Prathiba, 2016). Human resources and their management are significant factors that can secure an organization's competitive advantage and sustain that edge in competitive environments (O'Bryan & Casey, 2017). Business leaders prefer engaged employees because they display organizational citizenship behavior and their output exceeds that of their disengaged counterparts (Rekha & Sasmita, 2019). Leaders should invest in their human resources practices and ongoing performance assessments to improve a firm's products and services and prevent the risk of organizational decline (Cesário & Chambel, 2017). Social progress is evident among companies with engaged employees who exhibit high morale, emphasize teamwork, and maintain a positive work attitude (Ullah, Khattak, & Rahman, 2018). The impetus behind employee engagement remains varied, but the soft approach to employee

engagement, which entails leaders who trust, reward, recognize employees' efforts, and exemplify organizational integrity, bolstered job commitment and satisfaction (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Employee engagement is too important to be left unattended and leaders who remain unconcerned will risk losing their competitive edge.

Problem Statement

Employee disengagement is a direct threat to business survival because the universal issue coincides with lowered productivity, increased organizational conflict, and potential financial losses (Allam, 2017). Disengaged employees cost organizations between \$450 and \$550 billion annually (Rastogi, Pati, Krishnan, & Krishnan, 2018). The general business problem was that disengaged employees undermine organizational profitability and employers lack specific skills that will keep employees engaged. The specific business problem was that some media leaders lack motivational strategies to keep employees engaged.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the motivational strategies some media leaders use to keep employees engaged. The participants were five leaders with at least 2 years' experience in successful employee engagement. The leaders worked at a media station in the Caribbean island of Antigua and Barbuda. The five leaders were interviewed about the motivational strategies they implement within the organization to increase and maintain employee engagement. The results of this study may contribute to an understanding of the significance of employee engagement, which is important to organizational success (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Bolstering engagement

may lead to positive social change not only for employees and general institutions, but also for the wider community.

Nature of the Study

The qualitative method was most appropriate to explore the motivational strategies media leaders implement to sustain employee engagement. Qualitative researchers focus on the unquantifiable aspects of reality that provide an explanation of social relations dynamics (Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). Quantitative methods involve generating statistics, but qualitative researchers aim to understand the how and why behind the phenomenon (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The snapshots of statistics cannot suffice for depth that is needed to comprehend and address some business problems.

Qualitative data involves analysis conducted via the use of conceptualization, which enables the researcher to meaningfully analyze words and images (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). Qualitative research is not based on testing a hypothesis. Instead, qualitative researchers embrace the inductive approach which gives the investigator more freedom to capture true reality. Researcher bias is likely to exist in qualitative research, but Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora (2016) lauded the potential of the qualitative approach that can result in meaningful conclusions and a greater understanding of the subject matter. Although Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) discouraged the divide between quantitative and qualitative paradigms and advocated the mixed method approach, the qualitative method remains appropriate for this kind of study that requires a single researcher. Because of its duplicity, the mixed method, which requires more resources, is time-consuming, and can produce contradictory results.

The qualitative case study was much more advantageous for this investigation than other research designs because it enabled me to provide a holistic perspective after a close examination of leaders in a unit of the media entity. Neuman (2011) summarized conceptual validity, heuristic impact, causal mechanisms identification, calibration, holistic elaboration, and the ability to capture complexity as six major strengths of case study research. I made holistic connections between abstract ideas and concrete examples, which may provide problem-solving opportunities regardless of the case's complexities. I also used the qualitative case study to explore alignment with theoretical proposition in an authentic setting. Yin (2018) noted that the researcher gets the opportunity to confirm, challenge, or extend theory and pave the way for future research.

Ethnography, which was developed originally by anthropologists, would not be suitable for this research study. Ethnography is a qualitative field research that involves an in-depth study of a society, culture, or group and participant observation is the most popular ethnographic approach (Trochim et al., 2016). Despite the rich, detailed description that emerges as a result of the ethnographic design (Neuman, 2011), my focus was not on a group's culture, but on the motivational strategies media leaders use to keep employees engaged. Participant observation was not needed. Similarly, the phenomenological design would be inappropriate because this school of thought is a qualitative analysis of narrative data that centers on the personal meanings of participants' experiences with, and interpretations of, a particular phenomenon.

Research Question

The overarching research question was: What motivational strategies do some media leaders use to keep employees engaged?

Interview Questions

The interview questions were as follows:

1. What motivational strategies do you use to keep employees engaged?
2. How do motivational strategies help to maintain employee engagement at your organization?
3. Based upon your organization's experience, what motivational strategies have been the most effective to keep employees engaged?
4. How do employees respond to the motivational strategies you use to keep them engaged?
5. Based upon your organization's experience, what motivational strategies were least effective to keep employees engaged?
6. What fundamental difficulties did your organization encounter as you implemented motivational strategies to bolster employee engagement?
7. How did your organization address the fundamental challenges to implementing its strategies for employee engagement?
8. Based upon your experience, how have the motivational strategies you use to keep employees engaged increased your organization's performance?

9. What other information can you share about the motivational strategies your organization implemented to enhance employee engagement that we've not already covered?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was employee engagement theory. Employee engagement theory posits that the psychological immersion of employees into their work results in employees who are willing to exceed the duties stipulated in their job description (Gustomo & Gustomo, 2015). Employee engagement theory is akin to the self-determination theory (SDT) that is entrenched in the macro theory of human motivation, which examines the nature and drivers of motivation (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017). Employee engagement theory is synonymous with the concept of personal engagement, which Kahn (1990) used to explain employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional attachment to their work. Kahn's theory is based on the premise that once the working environment is physically, socially, and psychologically supportive, engagement will thrive and so too will productivity.

Employee engagement theory has three underlying concepts. The first is psychological meaningfulness. This concept aligns with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, which indicated that the onus is on leaders to establish a work environment that meets both lower-level and higher-level needs of employees to propel them to an appropriate level of self-actualization. Second, the psychological safety, indicates that engagement necessitates trusting, flexible relationships, and a management style that makes the working climate a second home (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015). The last

construct, psychological availability, is the sense of having the necessary physical, emotional, and psychological resources that empower employees to excel within the organization (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Employee engagement theory is the lens for viewing my study's results because I explored various motivational strategies media leaders use to keep their employees engaged. This conceptual framework was important because I compared and contrasted the various themes and motivational strategies that emerged during the stage of data analysis to the themes and strategies proposed by Maslow (1943), Deci and Ryan (1985), and Kahn (1990). Through the findings of this study, I substantiated the theory of engagement by past researchers and added to the body of knowledge on employee engagement.

Operational Definitions

Corporate social responsibility: Corporate social responsibility is a voluntary organizational strategy aimed at socioeconomic and environmental development (Godos-Díez, Cabeza-García, & Fernández-González, 2018).

Employee disengagement: Employee disengagement refers to the negative attitude of employees that causes physical, cognitive, and emotional detachment during role performance (Kahn, 1990).

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is the psychological state in which employees' positive organizational attitude enables them to exceed job requirements (Gustomo & Gustomo, 2015).

Employee identification. Employee identification is a psychological state in which an employee considers himself or herself a significant element who can determine organizational success or failure (Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

Organizational culture: Organizational culture is the shared beliefs, philosophies, and norms that drive peak performance (Idowu, 2017).

Organizational development: Organizational development is a systematic, multifaceted process aimed at propelling employee and company advancement (Banutu-Gomez & Banutu-Gomez, 2016).

Self-determination theory: Self-determination theory is a theory of human motivation that underlines the psychological importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as fundamental factors that promote human development (Turner, 2019).

Situational leadership: Situational leadership refers to a leadership theory that develops employee productivity through directive and supportive strategies (Shaikh & Shaikh, 2019).

Strategic leadership: Strategic leadership is creating integrated technical and social systems that address the needs of employees and customers (Westcott, 2014).

Transformation leadership: A style of leadership that inspires followers to achieve personal and organizational goals in an enabling environment (Li et al., 2019).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In professional academic research, assumptions are indispensable, acceptable truths (Yin, 2016). Although these statements cannot be verified or tested, they are still considered accurate (Zhuge, Chen, Anil, & Manica, 2016). I assumed that the sample was

representative of the population and that media leaders possessed the experience and expertise to strengthen employee engagement. I also assumed that participants were given sufficient time to answer each question. Another assumption is that the participants gave honest responses and provided adequate information on the motivational methods they implemented to augment employee engagement.

This doctoral research was not without limitations. As the word indicates, limitations highlight weaknesses or restrictions in the study (Uri, 2015). While the data that I collected may be richly informative, a key limitation was my sole focus on one organization. The focus on a single organization can hinder generalization although case study generalization is possible for theoretical propositions in spite of population differences (Yin, 2018). Another limitation was the use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling entails pinpointing and choosing proficient individuals who are knowledgeable and experienced about the area that is under research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The assumption was that the target population is adept and most suitable for assisting with this doctoral study.

Delimitations are the boundaries researchers establish to control or narrow the scope of the study (Qiu & Gullett, 2017). Five media leaders who had successful experiences with employee engagement participated in this study. Because I had worked at several media houses in Antigua, this media entity was one of the few major media organizations where I was never employed. As a result, I eliminated the issue of familiarity bias, which may negatively affect the accuracy of the findings.

Significance of the Study

Employee engagement is a vital issue that continues to captivate individuals in the field of business because of its direct influence on organizational profitability and survival. Employee engagement is connected to other positive concepts such as job commitment, satisfaction, happiness, and organizational citizenship behavior (Rekha & Sasmita, 2019). Engaged employees are not only more productive than their disengaged counterparts, but their presence, along with effective engagement strategies, also improve organizational climate exponentially and make work meaningful (Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2018).

Contribution to Business Practice

This doctoral study entailed valuable insights for business managers and leaders who have the power to improve the physical, social, psychological, and financial conditions of the workplace environment. The real catalysts behind competitive and viable firms are employees (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015). Workers must continue to be challenged, inspired, and appreciated for their discretionary effort (Ghasabeh & Provitera, 2017). The responsibilities of management include arming workers with the requisite knowledge and resources for effective job performance in an enabling climate that boosts employee confidence, morale, and productivity (Iqbal, 2011). The findings of this study may underscore various drivers of engagement, ranging from building personal relationships to sharing power (Schultz, 2014). The findings could also verify the importance of identifying and satisfying employees' worth, basic needs, and human rights, especially since managers' behavior or pressure tactics have been identified as the

primary reason for employee turnover (Reina, Rogers, Peterson, Byron, & Hom, 2018).

The findings and conclusions included recommendations and insights into employee engagement that can benefit leaders and followers worldwide who can collaborate for the common good.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change for leaders may include insight into various motivational strategies that bolster a sense of organizational belonging and self-esteem. Belonging and self-esteem can improve job performance and correlate with happiness, life-satisfaction, and well-being of employees (Kumar, 2017). This study may result in the positive behavioral change among leaders and employees. Once leaders prioritize employee engagement, they are likely to witness significant transformations in workers' vigor, dedication, and absorption (Dewing & McCormack, 2015).

Motivational strategies may help develop human capital and enhance organizational capacity (Casey & Sieber, 2016). By improving the sociopsychological landscape of businesses, where workers spend a significant part of their day, employee competence and productivity may increase (Ahlowalia, Tiwary, & Jha, 2014). Engaged employees may find work meaningful in an environment where their efforts are appreciated (Asiwe, Rothmann, Jorgensen, & Hill, 2017). Heightened productivity also coincides with better working conditions, wages, and salaries, coupled with increased profits and a competitive edge (Hanaysha, 2016). Content workers also tend to deliver better products and services, which can ensure customer loyalty (MacGillavry & Sinyan, 2016). The findings from this study may highlight the wider implications of employee

engagement. Owners of productive and profitable firms tend to invest in philanthropic deeds or corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives (Gupta & Sharma, 2016), which empowers employees, families, and members of the community.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The objective of this review of the literature was to explore the motivational strategies media leaders use to bolster engagement. This review comprises a comprehensive analysis of the much-talked-about concept of employee engagement, motivational strategies that exert discretionary effort, as well as the managerial implications for business success. I commenced with past and contemporary definitions of employee engagement that highlighted its positive side, as well as several concepts that are synonymous with and antithetical to engagement. Despite the influx of meanings surrounding the benefits of employee engagement, I extended the definition of engagement to include burnout, a negative or darker side of engagement that is underexplored in the literature.

The review also encompasses a discussion of three transcendental theories of motivation and employee engagement that transcend time: Kahn's engagement theory (1990), Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), and Deci and Ryan's SDT (1985). I discussed different themes that can be found in the theories of motivation and employee engagement and may rematerialize during the collection and analyzation of data and reporting of the findings. Because leadership matters and employees are essential to business success, I found it necessary to revisit human motivational theories centered on those universal truths. The majority of the literature review comprises the driving forces

of employee engagement, which include organizational culture, transformational and situational styles of leadership, and training and development. Based on empirical research, these drivers correlate with organizational productivity, profitability, and advancement.

The sources of this review, which were mostly written within the last 5 years, were peer-reviewed articles. Many of the articles were accessed online via Walden University's library or Google Scholar. The databases I used were: Sage, ResearchGate, Elsevier Journal Finder, and Emeraldinsight. I also perused reports and seminal books that were written by prominent business researchers, leaders, and entrepreneurs. A substantial amount of these resources was published within the last 5 years, and they included significant contributions to the field of business. Through a combination of all resources, I provided a highly analytical and holistic review of employee engagement and other related terms such as *productivity*, *employee performance*, *motivation*, *empowerment*, *strategic leadership*, and *training and development*.

Definitions of Employee Engagement

The construct of employee engagement was developed in Kahn's (1990) seminal work, which highlighted that engaged employees exhibit their preferred self on the job where they are physically, cognitively, and emotionally immersed into their work roles. Chandani, Mehta, Mall, and Khokhar (2016) expounded on the theory of engagement and explained that the intellectual aspect of engagement is tantamount to job dedication, while affective engagement refers to self-fulfillment, and social engagement is the relational aspect that improves performance. Indicating that engagement is varied,

Ruslan, Islam, and Noor (2014) identified three levels: engaged, not engaged, and disengaged. Engaged employees are thriving, motivated, and devoted workers who commit to superior performance standards (Bulkapuram, Wundavalli, Avula, & Reddy, 2015). While engaged employees are passionately productive about attaining organizational goals, not engaged employees work without passion and experience emotional and organizational disconnect (Chandani et al., 2016; Govindarajo, Kumar, & Ramulu, 2014). They do precisely what is required and are not interested in taking an extra mile (Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017).

After a decade of dormancy from 1990 to 2000, Kahn's engagement theory stimulated an influx of research that extended the definition of *employee engagement* as a fulfilling state of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). According to Khalaf, Hmoud, and Obeidat (2019), vigor refers to employees' high energy, mental resilience, and willingness; dedication denotes active and enthusiastic involvement, while absorption means work immersion. Employee engagement is also synonymous with operational excellence (Zainol, Hussin, & Othman, 2016), organizational citizenship behaviors (Barbuto & Story, 2011; Jena, Pradhan, & Basu, 2017; Sridhar & Thiruvankadam, 2014), job engagement (Chhetri, 2017), work engagement (Hanaysha, 2016), employee commitment (Irefin & Mechanic, 2014), and job enrichment (Nzewi, Chiekezie, Ekene, Raphael, & Ebuka, 2017).

Identifying employee engagement as a binary state of attitude and behavior, Iddagoda, Opatha, and Gunawardan (2015) preferred the label employee to job, organizational, and work engagement, because the focus is on a living entity in a job and

organization. Kahn (1990), like many researchers that followed, including Bhavani (2015), contrasted engagement with its seemingly antithetical concept, disengagement, which involves employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional detachment from their work. Whereas engaged employees are enthusiastic, willing, and actively involved (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019), disengaged employees are unhappy (Chandani et al., 2016), unresponsive, and detached holistically (Allam, 2017).

The meaning of engagement intertwines with other constructs like employee well-being (Haddon, 2018), self-determination (Nawrin, 2016), and job satisfaction (Khalaf et al., 2019; Lu, Lu, Gursoy, & Neale, 2016). Critics insisted that no clear definition exists (Dewing & McCormack, 2015; Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019), but Law, Wong, and Mobley (1998) and Rekha and Sasmita (2019) narrowed down engagement to a multidimensional concept. Employee engagement entails a passionate devotion to work (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014; Joo & Lee, 2017; Sarangi & Nayak, 2016) and exertion of discretionary effort on the job, which increases organizational brand and value (Burawat, Kuntonbutr, & Panisa, 2014; Shahid, 2013).

Despite the significant correlation between employee engagement and positive work ethics, Anthony-McMann, Ellinger, Astakhova, and Halbesleben (2016) found significant relationships between workplace stress and intellectual and social engagement, and between workplace stress and burnout, but they insisted that placing engagement on the same continuum as burnout would limit the definition. Maslach and Leiter (1997) asserted that burnout results when engagement is eroded, while Rothmann

(2003) emphasized that the initial meaningful and challenging work loses its significance in the world of exhausted employees.

Theories of Motivation and Employee Engagement

Kahn's (1990) Employee Engagement

Regardless of the popularity of the top-down approach, workplace conditions affect employees' behaviors and three conditions under which employee engagement thrives are: psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability (Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement is an intentional pursuit of work that contributes to organizational success (Janik & Rothmann, 2015; Joo & Lee, 2017). Kahn did not explain specifically how to address employee engagement, but the level of employee engagement centers on the answers given to three pertinent questions: a) How meaningful is it for me to immerse myself into this performance? b) How safe is it to do so? c) How available am I to do so? (Ruslan et al., 2014). Individuals should clearly see the importance of their work to make it worthwhile, and vision development will enable them to see the big picture of their work (Serrano & Reichard, 2011).

Meaningful work propels not only an understanding of self and the world in which individuals live, but also encapsulates greater good motivations to positively influence the world (Fouché, Rothmann, & Van der Vyver, 2017). The pursuit of meaningfulness is critical because the psychological state is an intrinsic need for individuality, which can be fulfilled once employees become engaged (Nawrin, 2016). The nature of the job, such as tasks and interactions, makes work meaningful for employees (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Engagement is a catalyst for employee

effectiveness; workers feel contented that they contribute to the economic development of organizations (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). The benefits of employee engagement also include greater productivity, increased retention, enhanced client trust, and higher profitability (Bhavani, 2015). This type of meaningfulness is equated to employees' return on investment into their work (Ruslan et al., 2014), unlike meaningless work, which often results in a lack of employee interest and indifference to work (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

The second condition that propels engagement is psychological safety, which is the true expression of the self without fear or damage to employees' self-concept, self-esteem, or interpersonal costs (Asiwe et al., 2017; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Psychological safety can also be described as the byproduct of organizational social procedure, which is the consistent supportive conversation among employees (Iqbal, Shabbir, Zameer, Khan, & Sandhu, 2017). Psychological safety makes learning from mistakes effective (Edmondson, 2004) and the level of psychological safety in any organization is mainly dependent on the social environment (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Negative psychological climates, characterized by a lack of support and organizational contribution, and exploitation result in negative employee emotions (Shuck & Reio, 2014).

Parallels between Kahn's psychosocial and Erikson's engagement theories solidify an understanding of psychological availability, especially because Erikson first addressed personality development from early adolescence to adulthood (Karkouti, 2014). For Erikson (1963), the first stage of basic trust versus mistrust (0-1 year) is

determined when warm parental/caregiver relationships produce a sense of trust, security, and reciprocity among children, but a disruption in this pattern has the opposite effect. The crisis can set the stage for the development of an unhealthy personality (Erikson, 1963). Similarly, Kahn (1990) insisted that a deficiency of psychological availability (physical, emotional, and psychological resources) triggers insecurity and frustration and creates impressions that hide employees' real identity.

Disengagement is associated with a lack of organizational identification, mistrust, unfulfilled ambitions, and stress (Govindarajo et al., 2014). Psychological resources are prerequisites for employees to be willing to bring their full selves into the role (Vila-Vázquez, Castro-Casal, Álvarez-Pérez, & Río-Araújo, 2018). Availability is a ready state of engagement in which the physical, psychological, and emotional resources are present for employees to perform their roles effectively (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Individuals who have sufficient emotional resources will make themselves available psychologically for work engagement (Asiwe et al., 2017), but where deficiency in resources exists, individuals tend to withdraw (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019).

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs

Although employee engagement is increasingly associated with Kahn's work, engagement, Dagher, Chapa, and Junaid (2015) highlighted that characteristics of employee engagement were implied in the literature long before Kahn's ethnographic research on psychological workplace conditions. Kavya and Padmavathy (2017) posited that Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of the earliest and prevalent theories of engagement that influenced future engagement programs. In his timeless theory of human

motivation, Maslow (1943) identified physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization as five fundamental needs of mankind, which reverberated in Kahn's qualitative study.

Maslow's physiological needs are basic necessities, while safety involves security and stability (Shahrawat & Shahrawat, 2017). Physiological needs are foundational because the other needs in Maslow's hierarchy only materialize once the basic needs are fulfilled (Maslow, 1943). The American psychologist noted, individuals who are deficient in food, safety, love, and esteem are likely to choose food above all the other needs because of its physiological importance (Maslow, 1954). Because of their necessity, physiological needs are intricately linked to human survival and considered the most urgent for fulfillment ((Lestari, Waluyo, & Wardani, 2019).

The second level, safety needs, is vital because it highlights the significance of maintaining order, which promotes engagement (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). Among the list of safety needs are job security, safe working conditions, physical health, and well-being (Maslow, 1943, 1954). Increased productivity, retention, and profitability are highest among engaged employees who tend to be loyal because they believe that their employer cares about their health and wellbeing (Bhavani, 2015).

Love or belongingness, which entails intimate relationships and comprises the last component of Maslow's deficiency needs stages, is also critical to employee engagement (King-Hill, 2015). The need for love and belongingness arises after the need for security has been adequately met (Lestari, et al., 2019). This aspect of love and belongingness is analogous to the social identity theory that incorporates organizational identity and

highlights that employees' sense of belonging in the workplace coincides with enhanced job commitment and engagement (Dai & Qin, 2016). Engaged employees are fulfilled, satisfied, and loyal workers who feel a sense of belongingness (Bhavani, 2015).

Whereas respect, dignity, and autonomy aptly describe the next level, esteem needs, growth, self-fulfillment, and fullest potential ideally define Maslow's pinnacle of self-actualization needs (Soelistya, Mashud, & Suryanto, 2016). During this stage, highly engaged employees become influential leaders who positively shape organizational culture and the workforce (Kavya & Padmavathy, 2017). Unlike the SDT, management must first address the deficiency needs in order to activate higher order needs, which can increase employee motivation and loyalty (Jerome, 2013).

Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory

Characterized by apparent humanistic principles, the SDT is a macro framework on motivation, personality, and wellness (DeRobertis & Bland, 2018; Turner, 2019). The SDT framework entails an explanation of why people are inherently inclined to move towards self-actualization once their psychological needs are fulfilled (Koole, Schlinkert, Maldei, & Baumann, 2018). Individuals learn not only about the importance of engagement via the SDT, but also the psychological repercussions of its absence (Meyer & Gagnè, 2008). SDT is based on three universal psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Competence is the feeling of effectiveness and mastery of doing a job, while autonomy signifies a level of independence or the employees' ability to control their actions (Rasskazova, Ivanova, & Sheldon, 2016). Employees' behavioral state can

influence organizational productivity and the more engaged workers are, the more likely they will exhibit professionalism (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Like Maslow's social needs and Kahn's psychological meaningfulness, psychological relatedness involves group identification or that innate desire to be accepted, form intimate relationships, and feel loved (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which are critical for psychological growth and the employees' well-being (Van den Broeck, Ferris, & Chang, 2016).

Embedded in SDT are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, critical factors that influence an individual's behavior (Browning, 2014). Intrinsic motivation is driven by internal rewards and can only be harnessed once the socio-environmental conditions are present (English, 2016). The nexus between engagement and intrinsic motivation is clear because energized employees are passionate about their work and develop a sense of fulfillment via task accomplishment (Riley, 2016). Intrinsic motivation enhances performance and a sense of individual competence and extrinsic motivation (rewards or avoidance of punishment) thrives on external forces, positive or negative reinforcement (Can, 2015). Incentivizing workers financially and nonfinancially bolster engagement because employees who are paid more and recognized for their work, are usually more engaged in their work (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). The presentation of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as an inside and outside the entity is problematic for researchers who asserted that extrinsic motivation can be either based on the level of self-determination to achieve goals (Locke & Schattke, 2018). SDT, like the expectancy-value theories (EVTs), provides a rationale for diverse behaviors and is vital to understanding employee engagement and the lack thereof (Savolainen, 2018).

Driving Forces of Employee Engagement

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is one construct in management research (Ahmed & Shafiq, 2014), which involves a set of unspoken guidelines that influence employees' behavior and interactions (Grewal & Levy, 2016). Organizational culture is the internal environment of a company's operations that drives employee engagement (Popescu & Grigore, 2007) and organizational objectives, and capitalize on the maximum use of the human resource (Rekha & Sasmita, 2019). Although the results of multiple studies on the role of organizational culture are inconclusive (Joseph & Kibera, 2019), a good understanding of the concept of organizational culture enables managers to better manage organizational change (Alsoulami, Banjar, & Mahran, 2018).

Culture is everything, which encompasses habits, relationships, teamwork, and organizational growth (Gordon, 2017). Because of the various types of organizational cultures, managers need to be more cognizant of the work climate they foster; the climate can either hinder or promote employee performance and functionality (Eldor, 2017). Organization culture is also vital to adequately deal with complex changing occurrences (Muzee, Bagire, & Ngoma, 2016). Preserving an effective organizational culture is all part of good strategic leadership (Palladan, Abdulkadir, & Chong, 2016).

Hierarchy (control) culture is a bureaucratic type of culture that is based on structure (Bingöl, Şener, & Çevik, 2013; Lee & Raschke, 2016). While this mechanical culture is effective for the leaders of international companies like McDonald's and Ford Motor Co. who prioritize rules to maintain stability, they alienate and disempower

employees, who find work meaningless (Acar & Acar, 2014). Alienation and disempowerment were evident in a longitudinal study on private organizations, which showed that the top-to-bottom culture made work less meaningful, although there was no connection between a hierarchical culture and reduced work engagement (Lee, Idris, & Delfabbro, 2017). The hierarchy culture is similar to power culture, where employees are marginalized and results prioritized (Brenyah & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017).

Contrastingly, the clan culture is a friendly and team-oriented environment, where the leader takes on a mentor or parental role to maintain cohesion and high morale (Carvalho, Castro, Silva, & Carvalho, 2018; Chidambaranathan & Swarooprani, 2017; Ohioorenaya & Eboreime, 2014). The clan culture epitomizes an enabling climate that focuses on making employees happy in order to sustain high levels of commitment and loyalty (Ergün & Tasgıt, 2013). A substantial amount of concern for customers' sensitivity is also evident in this culture characterized by flexibility (Alsoulami et al., 2018). Despite doubts about the feasibility of managing organizational culture, transformational leaders exemplify qualities of clan culture, which result in employees' discretionary efforts and psychological attachment to their jobs (Kim, 2013).

Whereas the control focus of the clan culture is internal and revolves around teamwork, the market culture's focus is external and emphasizes productivity and achievement (Chidambaranathan, & Swarooprani, 2017; Nagy, Hurta, Dunay, & Illés, 2015). In their pursuit of the competitive advantage, organizational leaders adopt a market culture in times of volatility or when customers' expectations are high (Madhani, 2014). The degree to which all employees are engaged with customer value creation is

what distinguishes market culture from other organizational cultures (Madhani, 2018).

The results oriented environment is extremely competitive because market share and penetration define success (Ergün & Tasgıt, 2013). The demanding market culture acts as a catalyst for employee engagement because workers are motivated to perform at an optimum level (Owoyemi & Ekwoaba, 2014). Success driven employees are self-centered, and their extraordinary level of individualism creates a nexus between higher innovation and market culture, as well as another type of culture called adhocracy (Iya, 2015).

Adhocracy is a developmental organizational culture characterized by creativity, innovation, and risk-taking (Carvalho et al., 2018; Joseph & Kibera, 2019). Adhocracy culture is innovation driven and exhibits flexibility and value creating change. The culture type is characterized by creativity, growth, and variety seeking. The aggressive pursuit of differentiation in the flexible, externally oriented culture promotes employee commitment, autonomy, and experimentation (Alsoulami et al., 2018; Ohioorenoya & Eboreime, 2014). A study on Spanish organizations revealed that adhocracy and clan cultures (unlike the hierarchy and market cultures) positively affected performance (Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez, & Sanz-Valle, 2016).

In another study of 358 faculty members at Islamic Azad University of Fars province, researchers found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and adhocracy, market, and clan culture, but not in the hierarchy culture, (Ashraf & Rezaie, 2015). Culture is a critical source of competitive advantage (Brenyah & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017), but ineffective management can make culture a liability (Owoyemi & Ekwoaba, 2014).

Although the adhocracy culture is innovator-friendly, it requires a unique and relational form of management that does not prioritize the optimization culture to the detriment of innovation (Vojak, Price, & Griffin, 2012).

Styles of Leadership

Business success in the 21st century results not only from talented employees but also from leadership that engages workers and looks beyond human resources management to secure that coveted, competitive edge (Sadeli, 2015). Propelling employees to Maslow's self-actualization level necessitates a motivational style of leadership that addresses workers' diverse needs (Buble, Juras, & Matic, 2014). The leader must resemble a man or woman for all seasons, a Sir Thomas More-like stature, whose integrity and respect for ethics are not influenced by environmental factors, such as time pressure, obedience to authority, and conformity bias (Prentice, 2014). This style of leadership must be grounded in Mill's utilitarianism, a rational theory that emphasizes the long-term benefits of pursuing the common good (Gustafson, 2013) and sufficiently strategic to get the job done. Strategic leadership, which is characterized by versatility, entails managing resources effectively to accomplish organizational goals (Palladan et al., 2016). Strategic leadership also includes multiple leadership perspectives and shares a nexus with transformational leadership (Muzee, et al., 2016).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is one of the most widely featured leadership theories in modern literature (Mujkić, Šehić, Rahimić, & Jusić, 2014; Othman, Hamzah, Abas, & Zakuan, 2017). Transformational leadership is effective management that involves

enabling employees to exert discretionary effort and attain organizational goals (Buila, Martínez, & Matutec, 2018; Koesmono, 2019). Transformational leadership is a reciprocal relationship of exceptional influence between leaders and followers, which bolsters morality, active engagement, and self-actualization (Northouse, 2016; Tarsik, Kassim, & Nasharudin, 2014). Transformational leadership comprises four dimensions: idealized influence or charisma, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Unlike pseudo transformational leaders, authentic transformational leaders are more effective because the ethical leaders better appeal to, and influence their followers' moral values (Copeland, 2016). The ethical exemplification of leaders enhances employee engagement and combat counterproductive behavior (Hartog & Belschak, 2012). Because the ethical quality of leaders shapes employee conduct, transformational leaders who have high standards, are most suitable to take the helm of organizations (Banerji & Krishnan, 2000). The idealized influence of these leaders has a positive effect on employees who perceive them as role models (Ahmad, Abbas, Latif, & Rasheed, 2014; Cetina & Kinikb, 2015).

Transformational leaders also understand the significance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and integrate it into their strategic plans (Prabhakar, Diab, & Bhargavi, 2016). Despite the paucity of research on the effect of CSR practices on employees' behavior (Schaefer, Terlutter, & Sandra Diehl, 2019), research shows that employee engagement is linked to employees' positive perception of leaders who implement CSR initiatives (Rupp et al., 2018). Leaders of CSR programs address ethical,

social, and environmental concerns of stakeholders (Grewal & Levy, 2016). Many individuals generally want to make a positive contribution to society, and CSR initiatives are the means through which they can make a difference and experience psychological meaningfulness (Asiwe et al., 2017). In a UK study on an energy company, CSR had varying effects on employees: those who fully engage, others who value personal CSR engagement outside the workplace, and those who perceive no value of CSR engagement at an organizational level (Slack, Corlett, & Morris, 2015). Although results differ, CSR is an important driver of employee engagement, which is needed for better performance (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Engagement heightens when management employs the relational approach and shares a joint commitment to CSR with employees (Godkin, 2015).

Despite limited literature on transformational leadership's connection to CSR, there was a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and a firm's strategic orientation to CSR, but there was no significant link between the ethical integrity of leaders to the adoption of CSR practices in 50 Portuguese firms (Veríssimo & Lacerda, 2015a). In another quantitative study, involving 170 senior managers from 50 organizations, integrity was found to be a predictor of transformational leadership behavior; the behaviors of transformational leaders were linked to CSR practices, and leaders rated with higher integrity were engaged in CSR because they exhibit more transformational leadership behaviors (Veríssimo & Lacerda, 2015b). Employees are likely to accomplish organizational goals because they admire these charismatic leaders who epitomize altruistic and humanistic values (Alrowwad, Obeidat, Tarhini, & Aqqad,

2017). Leaders must also exemplify the values and principles they want the staff to embody because this encourages employees to become intrinsically motivated and willing to imitate their behavior (Hartog & Belschak, 2012).

Additionally, company involvement in higher CSR interventions and reputations are able to attract more committed employees who engage themselves in the organization's goal and objective (Gupta & Sharma, 2016). Other CSR advantages include a higher rate of employee retention and morale (Hejjas, Miller, & Scarles, 2019). Transformational leaders are not saints but are resilient individuals, or as Nelson Mandela once described himself, a sinner who kept trying (Gormley, 2016). In a quantitative study, the results showed that resilience and transformational leadership are positively related to work engagement (Wang, Li, & Li, 2017).

Good interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, management style, and process are also vital factors that foster engagement (Carter, 2016; Kahn, 1990; Kim, 2016). The effectiveness of transformational leaders manifests itself in the relationships with their followers, and through individualized consideration, transformational leaders assume a mentor role to help followers maximize their potential (McCleskey, 2014; Prabhakar et al., 2016). This enabling environment is purpose-driven; it reflects aspirations and provides a sense of meaning and support that enhances employee development (Quinn & Thakorjuly, 2018). As was evident with Bob Galvin's Six Sigma program, the transformational leader raised employees' self-confidence to accomplish personal and organizational goals and made Motorola a viable competitor (Westcott, 2014). This level of support developed workers' ego and self-esteem (Ali & Puah, 2018). Self-esteem is a

feeling of self-worth and value, and in a psychological study of 600 Indian workers, results showed that high self-esteem correlates with better performance and vice versa (Kumar, 2017). The competence transformational leaders exhibit on the job provides psychological stimulation for employees who perform better (Ali & Puah, 2018). Providing psychological resources can combat insecurity or a heightened self-consciousness that coincides with employee disengagement (Kahn, 1990).

Employee engagement means a culture change and transformational leaders are ideal for changing an organization's culture because they create a sense of purpose, organizational identity, and engagement (Moldovan & Macarie, 2014). For instance, the culture of one of Genetech's largest divisions was transformed by then senior vice president Jennifer Cook, whose team implemented her people-first-then-employee-second philosophy (Chatman, 2014). Collaboration, trust, and learning are three dimensions that comprise organizational culture (Ghasabeh & Provitera, 2017). Transformational leaders understand the power positive relationships wield, so they promote collaboration and teamwork and enable others to act (Cetina & Kinikb, 2015; Olson & Simerson, 2015). They do not stereotype employees but view them as individuals with specific needs, including the need to be future leaders (Rowold, 2008). These agents of change pay special attention to the human elements by creating permanent communication channels that pervade the organization and involve all classes of workers in the planning and implementation stages of cultural transformation (Moldovan & Macarie, 2014).

Effective internal communication ensures employee engagement (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014), and communication, on a whole, builds meaningful relationships and trust, which generates commitment (Gordon, 2017; Kahn, 1990; Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Transformational leaders also recognize that a vision is powerless until they get employees to buy-in so they clearly communicate their vision to every employee (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). Transformational leaders also create alignment by setting direction, charting the course, and talking the walk, and they become servant leaders by modeling and nurturing bottom-up (Benson, 2015). These visionary leaders inspire followers intellectually as employees transcend job description requirements to solve problems and unleash creativity and innovation (Ghasabeh & Provitera, 2017).

Intellectual stimulation should be enhanced because it coincides with challenging work, extends job tenure, and affects employee engagement the most (Blomme, Kodden, & Beasley-Suffolk, 2015; Brenyah & Damoah, 2016). Although routine work builds competence, challenging work fosters psychological meaningfulness and subsequently, engagement (Kahn, 1990). Transformational leaders should use the McKinsey 7S Model to institute organizational change because it can be aligned to tackle any issue (Singh, 2013). Alignment of fundamental elements of the 7S Model (strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff, and skills) can cultivate a culture of empowerment and increase capacity for learning and agility (Peters, 2011). Despite the influence of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration shape outcomes significantly (Orabi, 2016).

Transformational leaders sustain their vision by creating a supportive environment where intrinsically motivated employees put organization before self (Jensen & Bro, 2018). In spite of its positive effect on employee engagement and followers' needs, transformational leadership is too vague and can be abused (Northouse, 2016). The transformational leadership model cannot adequately combat the challenges contemporary leaders encounter; other styles of leadership, which are compatible with employee engagement need to be examined (Latham, 2014). Based on the circumstances, transformational and transactional leadership styles can be effective (Yasir, Imran, Irshad, Mohamad, & Khan, 2016). In times of rapid organizational change, transactional leadership is most suitable, but under stable circumstances, transformational leadership is ideal (Castiglione, 2006).

Situational Leadership

As an apparent reaction to trait-based leadership, Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership emerged on the premise that people are generally different and that there exists no optimal profile of leaders (Ghazzawi, Shoughari, & Osta, 2017). Rather than a charismatic and heroic conception of leadership, the theory of situational leadership suggests that situations shape the behavior of leaders who can adapt to the dynamics (Kaifi, Noor, Nguyen, Aslami, & Khanfar, 2014; Okoroji, Anyanwu, & Ukpere, 2014; Vroom & Jago, 2007). Incorporating other leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, the behaviors of situational leaders are either task-oriented or people-focused (McCleskey, 2014). According to Daft and Marcic (2006), these styles exhibit a high concern for tasks and low concern for relationships

(telling) and its antithesis (selling), as well as showing concern for people and tasks (participating) and none for tasks and relationships (delegating). Before they adopt any style, the directive and supportive dimensions of leaders should be based on their knowledge of subordinates' needs (Northouse, 2004). The right leadership can drive employee engagement and organizational performance (Ganesan, Azli, & Fageeh, 2017; O'Bryan & Casey, 2017). The right leaderships can cater for different employees: those who lack competency and are unwilling to perform the task, lack competency and are willing, competent but lacks self-confidence, and self-confident, willing, and capable (Olson & Simerson, 2015).

Autocratic or authoritarian leadership is an anti-empowerment style characterized by the control of leaders and obedience of subordinates (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowska, 2018). Although the autocratic style induces turnover intentions and counterproductive behaviors (Puni, Agyemang, & Asamoah, 2016), it useful for situations involving: new untrained employees who must be guided, a short timeframe for risky short-term projects, and industries where employees perform low skilled, routine jobs that do not require much motivation (Cunningham, Salomone, & Wielgus, 2015; Puni, et al., 2016). The autocratic style was positively and significantly associated with employee engagement, despite employees' dissatisfaction with the manipulations and threats of leaders (Puni et al., 2016; Yao, Locke, & Jamal, 2018). In line with the SDT and autocratic tactics, situational leaders enhance employee engagement and commitment significantly via rewards, which motivate the staff to attain company goals (Zainol et al., 2016). The theory of situational leadership suggests that where employee competence is low, leaders

should be task-motivated and directive, but as competence builds, leaders should be increasingly relationship-motivated and supportive (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Situational leaders who demonstrate this level of care and support for subordinates are likely to keep employees engaged (Ghazzawi et al., 2017).

In a study of 262 employees in private companies in Abia, Nigeria, and Ndubueze, individuals who work under democratic leaders were more likely to exhibit organizational citizenship (Ndubueze & Akanni, 2015). Leaders who use the democratic style increase job satisfaction by creating a flexible, progressive environment, listening actively, and empathizing with employees (Nickels, McHugh, & McHugh, 2008; Yao et al., 2018). If the relationship between the leaders and employees is good, effectiveness will be high on the part of the employees who are completing highly structured tasks (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). Identified as a critical factor for goal accomplishment, employee motivation is essential to enhancing superior employee performance and leadership effectiveness (Lumbasi, K'Aol, & Ouma, 2016). The democratic style is also referred to as the shared style because these leaders share power by actively involving the staff in the decision-making process (Fiaz, Su, Ikram, & Saqib, 2017; Igbaekemen & Odivwri, 2015). Leaders of this human relation approach recognize that inclusion improves the quality of the decision and acknowledge that the real source of power and authority emanates from the governed (Dotse & Asumeng, 2014).

Whereas democratic leaders play an integral role in employee engagement, Foster (2002) asserted that laissez-faire leaders transplant all rights and power to make decisions to employees. Because of absence or minimal interaction of laissez-faire leaders,

employees do not trust their superiors (Yasir et al., 2016). Some employees cannot manage too much authority and responsibility, especially if the task exceeds their capabilities (Wong & Giessner, 2018). Although laissez-faire or delegative leaders do not put emphasis on performance or people, the laissez-faire style of leadership can boost productivity and morale (Fiaz et al., 2017). The hands-off approach is effective when employees are highly skilled, experienced, educated, and have that intrinsic drive to work successfully on their own (Khan et al., 2015).

Despite the limitations of the various leadership styles, situational leaders can adopt the style that best matches the situation: laissez-faire for the highly qualified, autocratic for the morally poor, and democratic for the willing, but not competent workers (Khan et al., 2015). Contemporary organizations need leaders who can sustain engagement and tackle other complexities of the dynamic business environment (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). Because employees are not homogenous, leaders must address their diverse needs to capitalize on employee engagement (Blomme et al., 2015).

Tomorrow's employees' purpose for working will surpass a mere paycheck because they expect that their needs for affiliation and growth, and purpose for working will be fulfilled on the job (Khalaf et al., 2019; Shuck & Wollard, 2008). The future is here; and empirical evidence has shown that a high level of employee engagement results in increased retention, performance, customer loyalty, and stakeholder satisfaction (Sinha & Trivedi, 2014). The conventional concept of leadership based on skills acquisition suffices no longer in today's volatile business climate that requires an immense level of

emotional intelligence (O'Bryan & Casey, 2017). Leaders who possess emotional intelligence, characterized by self-awareness and social expertise, as well as intellectual intelligence, can make organizational goals a reality (Niță, 2015).

Training and Development

As primary precursors to employee engagement, leaders invest in training and development programs because they build knowledge, skills, and competencies that are pivotal to organizational success (Ahmed, Phulpoto, Umrani, & Abbas, 2015; Ganesh & Indradevi, 2015; Zahra, Iram, & Naeem, 2014). In the contemporary business, training as a Human Resource Development (HRD) practice is critical to employee engagement because it augments personal and technical skills and overall organizational capacity (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Similarly, development is synonymous with employee growth via systematic processes that help to capitalize on employees' capabilities (Hazra, Ghosh, & Sengupta, 2017). Training is an empowering tool for employees, which helps achieve organizational goals by building confidence and combating weakness (Paynevandy, 2016; Zreen, Farooq, & Yasmin, 2018).

Training, which is continuous and multidimensional, is most effective when it incorporates the objectives of the organization (Ganesh & Indradevi, 2015).

Organizational problems, such as absenteeism and uncommitted workforce, are byproducts of little or no employee training; training staff boosts job motivation, satisfaction, and enrichment (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llusar, 2018; Semwal & Dhyani, 2017; Zahra et al., 2014). Training coincides with job satisfaction because when employees are competent at their jobs, they tend to be more productive unlike their

dissatisfied colleagues (Hazra et al., 2017; Naqvi, Ishtiaq, Kanwal, & Ali, 2013). In a study of 260 Korean companies, results showed that corporate expenditure for internal training augments innovative performance (Sung & Choi, 2014).

Training is a multifaceted process that comprises elements like Need Assessment, Training Design, Trainer and Delivery, and Post Training Evaluation (Buckley & Caple, 2009). Need Assessment is a vital pre-training phase where who needs to be trained, problems, and appropriate antidotes are identified, while training design entails the engaging, educational methods or the specific type of training (Ahmed et al., 2015; Ejakait, 2016). Professionals should execute the training program because they possess the experience and expertise that accompany successful training that can significantly enhance post-training employee engagement (Ahmed et al., 2015). Post-training evaluation, as the name indicates, occurs at the end of the training and involves planning for future training that aligns with organizational goals (Hazra, et al., 2017).

In this era of diversity that requires a level of cultural competence to mitigate against ethnocentrism and other forms of racism (Blackburn, 2015), training and development should be continuous. Researchers compared organizations to cultural mosaics and found that confusion prevails in the absence of cultural competence (Costantini, et al., 2017). Leaders who possess diversity intelligence recognize that adequate training and development play a large role in employee retention and the greater the intellectual capital, the better the value creation (Ulrich, Brockbank, Younger, & Ulrich, 2012). A sense of belongingness is critical to employee engagement (Maslow, 1943) and when managers and subordinates are trained, interpersonal skills strengthen,

while stereotyping and mistrust diminish among staff and customers (Rekers & Rekers, 2004).

In a study on the nexus between work empowerment and work engagement, researchers highlighted four dimensions of work empowerment that motivate employees intrinsically on the job: autonomy, feedback, meaningfulness, and growth (Joo, Lim, & Kim, 2016). Employee autonomy is associated with independence, substantial freedom, and discretion that workers use on the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). In an enabling environment, empowerment results from individuals who are well-trained and can confidently make decisions without being second-guessed (Schultz, 2014). A good training program also entails feedback and is integrally enveloped in learning, as well as growth and development (Kouzes & Posner, 2016). Feedback should be reciprocal and specific because it not only leads to professional growth, but also highlights the effectiveness of the training or areas that need improvement (Hardavella, Aamli-Gagnat, Saad, Rousalova, & Sreter, 2017). Trainees' learning satisfaction is based on the content of the training (Kumar & Kumar, 2017). The manner of delivery is also a powerful motivational force (Rangel et al., 2015).

A direct relationship between positive training experiences and attitudes and proficiency was found in a study that focused on 237 employees from an academic institution and three businesses in three American states (Truitt, 2011). Like work, training must be meaningful; workers must see the training's relevance to their development, which align them for career growth and subsequently heighten their motivation (Cheng & Ho, 2001). Training also makes employees transition willingly

from old ways to more contemporary methods of working that will strengthen organizational performance (Chaudhry, Jariko, Mushtaque, Mahesar, & Ghani, 2017). Despite the dearth of research on training and employee engagement, employee training is likely to promote employee engagement and enhance workers' psychological wellbeing (Ahmed et al., 2015). Employee training is also an excellent tool to measure employee performance (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015).

Transition

Section 1 commenced with the background of the problem that highlighted the magnitude of employee disengagement and the benefits of sustaining employee engagement. I transitioned to an equally vital section, the problem statement, which further highlighted the severity of the problem of employee engagement and the economic repercussions of disengagement. The rationale for undertaking the study and the study's potential positive influence on social change in the purpose statement was also discussed.

The other subsections are the nature of the study, which encompassed the research methodology and case study design, research and interview questions, and the conceptual framework that formed the backbone of the qualitative study. Ten operational definitions of frequently used concepts, as well as the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, preceded the significance of the study that pinpointed the contribution it can make in the world of business and its implications for social change. The final aspect of Section 1 was a review of the professional and academic literature that comprised past and present definitions of employee engagement, motivational theories, and 4 prominent drivers of

employee engagement: organizational culture, transformational leadership, situational leadership, and training and development.

Section 2 begins with a duplicate of the purpose statement and also includes the critical role of the researcher during data collection, eligibility and relationship with participants, and justification of the use of qualitative research method, case study design, and purposeful sampling. Section 2 comprises ethical considerations before, during, and after data collection, and the instrument and technique, which will be used to acquire the data. Section 2 also includes the process of data analysis to be executed and the method I undertook to identify emerging themes, improve data saturation, and strengthen reliability and validity.

In section 3, I discuss the study's findings, along with recommendations for organizational improvement. I also examine the limitations and ways to address the various limitations in future studies. Additionally, I suggest ways to enhance reliability and validity and document my reflections of possible researcher biases and ideological changes.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the motivational strategies some media leaders use to keep employees engaged. The participants were five leaders with at least 2 years' experience in successful employee engagement. The leaders worked at a media station in the Caribbean island of Antigua and Barbuda. The five leaders were interviewed about the motivational strategies they implement within the organization to increase and maintain employee engagement. The results of this study may contribute to an understanding of the significance of employee engagement, which is important to organizational success (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Bolstering engagement may lead to positive social change not only for employees and general institutions, but also for the wider community.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research is a vehicle through which the researcher transports and bolsters an understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). As the primary instrument of data collection, the researcher's role is extremely critical (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015), because it involves tapping into the inner state of participants. In the predata collection phase where media leaders were furnished with vital information, such as the rationale for the study, the reasons why they were selected, and the study's potential implications, I promised the participants confidentiality. Confidentiality does not involve revealing the names or identity of participants through the responses

(Bullock, 2016). Participants signed and received a copy of an informed consent document before they took part in the study. The researcher must not only inform the participants about the purpose and nature of the research but must also ensure that they actively volunteer to be a part of the study (Bullock, 2016). I also underscored the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time. The withdrawal aspect of ethical consideration is a right that participants still possess after they have consented (Saunders et al., 2015). Other basic, universal principles that are stipulated in the Belmont Report were also employed. They are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Miracle, 2016). I respected the opinions of each participant and treated all participants fairly.

Another role of the researcher is to ensure that the instrument used to collect data, does so as accurately as possible (Bajpai & Bajpai, 2014). The researcher must also ensure that data saturation is achieved and as much bias is eliminated (Fusch & Ness, 2015) during data collection. In line with the Belmont Report, interview questions were prepared in advance and structured strategically to allow the participants to elaborate. Following the interview, the participants got the opportunity to verify my interpretation to avoid any misunderstanding. Researchers should not aim to deceive but should strive to present participants' perspectives truthfully (Trochim et al., 2016). The semistructured and open ended interview questions were neither double-barreled nor misleading. My probing and prompting propelled greater engagement and provided a significant amount of data that generated various themes and several motivational strategies media leaders used to bolster employee engagement.

As a journalist and educator, who had long been interested in employee engagement, I recognize that productivity is a serious issue plaguing various organizations and decided to research work productivity among employees for my Master's and doctorate in Business Administration at a media agency in Antigua and barbuda. The targets of this study were media leaders and while I knew the names and faces of the leaders, I had no affiliation with the participants. Familiarity can result in bias and an important duty of the researcher is to augment the credibility of the study by eliminating as much bias as possible (Galdas, 2017). As the sole interviewer, I listened actively to participants and did not assume or preempt their responses. When individuals listen skillfully, they develop better comprehension (Purdy & Manning, 2014). Active listening surpasses physical hearing and is the highest level of listening that occurs in an unrushed environment barred of interruptions (Jahromi, Tabatabaee, Abdar, & Rajabi, 2016). With 15 years' experience in journalism and 20 years in the education system, I was able to talk less and strengthen the vital skill of active listening, which results in powerful insights.

Participants

Participants are individuals who provide case study data or evidence primarily via interviews (Yin, 2018). The role of participants in any study must not be undervalued because the method of data collection and the responses of participants to various questions influence the study significantly. The eligibility of participants was also vital, especially in this case where experience and expertise matter. I targeted professional media leaders at the media agency who possessed substantial knowledge of motivational

strategies and had employed engagement initiatives successfully at the company for a minimum of 2 years. All participants met the eligibility criteria.

Recruiting participants is not always an easy endeavor (Frandsen, Thow, & Ferguson, 2016), but researchers can attain success by defining a sampling approach, pinpointing, accessing, and screening participants, as well as obtaining informed consent (Probyn, Howarth, & Maz, 2017). I gained access to participants by sending a formal letter to the point person at the media station via email. Because that individual did not know me, the minimum requirement of research was employed. The minimum requirement involves seeking permission (Saunders et al., 2015). I requested permission to conduct a study on the organization and outlined essential information such as the purpose, targets, and positive implications of the study. I also informed the point person that the company will be furnished with a copy of the study's findings. Research is an investigative process that builds public knowledge (Trochim et al., 2016). Once published, I will share the findings with the media house because a major objective of the study is to improve operations at all media entities.

A manager at the media agency gave me the contact information for five media leaders. I phoned and emailed the potential participants and informed them about: the reasons why they were selected, what the study entails, and the importance of their participation, which is optional. I also guaranteed confidentiality. The Declaration of Helsinki highlighted the significance of protecting the privacy of participants and keeping their personal information confidential (Al Tajir, 2018). Participants were notified orally and in writing via a consent form that they were free to withdraw from the study at any

time. As a principal component of ethical rigor, the consent form indicates participants' voluntary participation (Probyn et al., 2017). The consent form comprises simple language, a summary of the study's purpose and benefits, and who will have access to the data (Al Tajir, 2018). Potential participants were not be contacted frequently before signing the consent form. I did not pressure the potential participants whom I wanted to sign without any coercion. All participants signed the consent form willingly several days before I conducted interviews face-to-face.

I remained cognizant that, like with engaged employees, empowerment is critical to participants. After I suggested a few appropriate places and times to conduct the interview, all participants suggested that their workplace would be most conducive between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. It is important that the researcher maintain contact and build trust with participants (Kondowe & Booyens, 2014). I used the incremental strategy with participants. The incremental strategy is effective for observation (Saunders et al., 2015), but can be transplanted to this study. I called each participant and ensured that participants were well-informed about the interview procedure before data collection started. I always exhibited professional courtesy to participants and expressed my gratitude for their voluntary efforts.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Qualitative research was selected because this nonstatistical methodology is implemented to acquire extensive data on people's experiences and capture multiple realities (Rahman, 2017). Qualitative research is tantamount to a form of social action,

which enables individuals to understand human behavior and the social reality of participants (Mohajan, 2018). Supporters of quantitative research criticize the qualitative method as being unrepresentative because of its small samples and biased because of the researcher's assessment of results (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & de Lacey, 2016). Unlike the quantitative approach, qualitative research does not involve oversimplification for the sake of generalization; qualitative research involves trustworthiness, credibility, applicability, and consistency that ensures transparency, validity, and reliability (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Researcher detachment is a major weakness of quantitative research (Daniel, 2016). Despite its time-saving advantage and focus on numerical data (Katz, 2015), the quantitative method would hinder the flexibility and scope needed to obtain in-depth information on the motivational strategies of media leaders.

Initially, I had considered using the mixed method for this research study but based on the literature, I realized that it was not the most appropriate method for me. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, requires a high level of expertise some graduate students have yet to master (Plastow, 2016). Researchers need to first determine if greater value will be added using the mixed rather than the single method (McKim, 2017). For this study, the qualitative approach was used to obtain rich and sufficient data, while maintaining a level of objectivity that captures complex realities.

Research Design

Understanding what research design involves is equivalent to conducting good research (Ejimabo, 2015), and the case study is a powerful type of qualitative research design (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017) that is appropriate for this study. The

use of a single case study enabled the researcher to conduct an intensive investigation into a phenomenon (Heale & Twycross, 2018; Ponelis, 2015). But before selecting the case study, I examined the other qualitative designs, including ethnography. Ethnography centers on highly descriptive discourse about the cultural aspects of social groups (Biernacka-Liczner & Paprocka, 2016), which would exclude it as a choice of design for this study. I did not examine the cultural dimensions of any social group. Furthermore, ethnographic research necessitates seasoned researchers (Gordon, 2018), and despite the debate on the length of time to conduct fieldwork (Rashid, Caine, & Goez, 2015), ethnographic researchers usually dedicate a substantial amount of time to gain their subjects' trust and pursue all areas of their lives (Gordon, 2018). The demand for personal, holistic involvement is not required for a case study researcher exploring a specific aspect like the motivational strategies media leaders use to boost employee engagement.

Like ethnography, the historical and narrative designs were incompatible with the qualitative study. My concentration was primarily on the present practices of media leaders, rather than evaluating past events to explain current and anticipate future occurrences (Mohajan, 2018). While the narrative design entails telling stories, which can generate useful data (Felton & Stickley, 2018), I largely used the expositional discourse that eliminates the chronological limitation of the narrative approach. Like description, exposition is known to be a major discourse of case study researchers.

Phenomenology and grounded theory are two more qualitative designs that proved futile. Although phenomenology might not concentrate on the lived experiences

of individuals (Gallagher, 2012), the school of thought is largely synonymous with people's experiences and interpretations of a particular phenomenon (Teherani et al., 2015). Researchers also use phenomenology when there is inadequate information about a phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018), but the study does not center on life's experiences, and since Kahn's (1990) seminal work, a substantial amount of information on employee engagement has developed because of its connection to organizational profitability and survival (Gupta, & Sharma, 2018; Knight, Patterson, & Dawson, 2017). A major advantage the case study has over the phenomenological and grounded theory designs is time. But the collection of data is time-consuming and before persons use the grounded theory, they must first consider their research duration, data access, as well as their capabilities (Saunders et al., 2015). Grounded theory researchers pay keen attention to an event's social and psychological processes and help to bridge the gaps of new perspectives (Singh & Estefan, 2018). Like the multiple case study, the grounded theory requires a level of expertise that many students lack. The single case study is much more manageable for students, especially when it aligns with the study's research question and objectives (Saunders et al., 2015).

The issue of data saturation is a critical element of contemporary qualitative research because it generates rich data and guarantees rigor (Morse, 2015). Data saturation occurs when there is no need for further data collection or when data collection becomes counterproductive (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In small studies such as the single case study, data saturation was much more achievable than in larger research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Qualitative researchers face multiple criticisms for using small samples, but

sample efficiency can be enhanced when researchers ask participants more probing questions (Weller et al., 2018). Probing promotes clarification, eliminates ambiguities, and explores unexpected responses (Singer & Couper, 2017). Data saturation was achieved by interviewing professionals who are capable of sustaining employee engagement and providing comprehensive data because of their extensive knowledge and skill set.

The researcher should be extremely knowledgeable about the topic because a lack of knowledge can lead to missed opportunities to probe and gain further insights. Probing not only improves the learning process (Yang, 2017), but it also leads to effective data collection. Probing is a prerequisite for gathering richer data (Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera, & Martimianakis, 2016), but it comes with subject familiarity. Researchers need to be well-informed or well-read about the phenomenon under investigation (Saunders et al., 2015). I explored past and present literature on employee engagement and paid close attention to the limitations of various studies in an effort not to repeat the same blunders. I recognized the achievement of data saturation when the responses of participants aligned with the literature and when the similarities in their responses are inescapable. The similarity-phase is also known as replication (Morse, 2015). I paid close attention to data saturation, which is vital to ensuring that objectives are met and the overarching research question is answered without skepticism.

Population and Sampling

In an effort to augment credibility and promote data integrity, qualitative researchers specify their study population (Asiamah, Mensah, & Oteng-Abayie, 2017).

The population of interest was located at a small, media organization in Antigua.

Deliberate sampling, small sample size, and conceptual requirements are major characteristics of qualitative research (Moser & Korstjens, 2018), and this study was no exception. The sample of five leaders were taken from various departments within the media station.

I used purposeful sampling, also known as purposive or judgmental sampling. Purposeful sampling aligns with the exploratory case study design (Taherdoost, 2016) and qualitative researchers use purposeful sampling when they are seeking a significant amount of information on a particular phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). The nonprobability sampling is not dependent on underlying theories or a specific amount of participants; rather nonprobability sampling is based on three aspects: the type, nature, and purpose of the study or the expectation that participants will provide ample information (Etikan et al., 2016).

The researcher should employ a homogenous process and choose participants based on the research question (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). I purposefully targeted a homogenous sample of media leaders for a combination of reasons: they worked at the organization for several years, were knowledgeable about employee engagement strategies, and were successful in implementing motivational strategies that enhanced employee performance at the media company for at least 2 years. Despite the limits of generalization of purposive sampling (Taherdoost, 2016), it can be used to make theoretical, analytical, and logical justifications for generalizations (Sharma, 2017).

An adequate collection of extensive and diverse data is a fundamental criterion of data saturation (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). I ensured data saturation when no new data emerge. Participants got sufficient time to review my interpretation of their responses as I identified recurrent themes that may also be in the literature on employee engagement.

Interviews are largely synonymous with qualitative research but they are also a vital source of evidence in case studies (Yin, 2018). Although telephone interviews are increasingly popular (Oltmann, 2016) and can be effective as face to face interviews even though they are shorter (Rahman, 2015), I believe that in-person interviews are supreme and conducted them face-to-face. The study's setting is very significant because it could positively or negatively affect the execution of the research (Majid, 2018). The participants should determine an appropriate time and setting for the interviews (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Participants chose a time and setting in their unoccupied, workplace offices where they were able to speak without restrictions. The dual nature of a sound qualitative interview progresses seamlessly and is information-rich (Dörnyei, 2007). A conversation-friendly atmosphere was established, which made participants relax and elaborate as I listened patiently and keenly to their responses. Yin (2018) asserted that a good case study listener makes keen observations, comprehends context, reads between the lines, and assimilates a substantial amount of data.

Ethical Research

Ethical issues are indispensable in contemporary research, especially in cases where data sources are human participants (Yip, Han, & Sng, 2016). The participants were not given any incentives before, during, or after the study. After I explained the

nature of the research, the participants signed an informed consent form. The form included the purpose of the study, procedures, duration, and implications of the study, as well as the right of participants to withdraw at any time during the course of the research (Krajnović & Jocić, 2017). Researchers must not only mention, but also explain the ethical considerations in their research (McKenna & Gray, 2018). Several days before the interview, I verbally reiterated the conditions stipulated in the informed consent form and explained to all participants that the interviews will be recorded to avoid any misquote of their responses. As Jamshed (2014) posited, the recording of interviews can capture data effectively.

Participants were informed that the study was approved by their superior and if they wanted to withdraw, I will adhere respectfully. Researchers should respect the decision of participants who are as independent beings (Trochim et al., 2016). Emphasis was placed on the ultimate objective of the study, which was to examine the motivational strategies of leaders that boost employee engagement. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University ensured that this doctoral research study complied with ethical standards. Data was not collected until the IRB issued an approval number (12-11-19-0434255) for the final doctoral study.

Every researcher needs to ensure the well-being of all participants (Kara & Lucy, 2017) and be mindful that confidentiality enhances the quality of research (Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2014). I respected and protected the confidentiality of participants and kept their names confidential by referring to them as P1, P2, P3, P4, or P5. The mp3 data of interview recordings was secured electronically in an encrypted file and will

remain in an encrypted file for 5 years in a safe place. The files will be permanently deleted once the 5 years expire.

Data Collection Instruments

Trustworthy information can be obtained during the data collection phase once researchers use valid instruments (Dunemmn, Roehrs, & Wilson, 2017) such as interviews that can generate richer data rather than surveys (Paradis et al., 2016). Semistructured interviews can be used to collect in-depth data on the engagement strategies of media leaders because they help to keep participants focused, responding to essential questions that are related to the overarching research question (Jamshed, 2014). I was solely responsible for collecting data and conducted one interview with each participant. The interviews were conducted in person and participants responded individually and systematically to 9 preset, logically ordered open-ended questions (see Appendix A). Although the questions were predetermined, they stimulated discussions, which allowed respondents to elucidate and provide data that can only be acquired through semistructured interviews (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). I recorded each session of face-to-face interviews using a voice recorder and use two backup recorders in the event my main audio recorder fails. I made a conscious decision not to write too many notes during the interviews and allowed the participants to speak without being distracted by my note-taking. The timespan of the interviews ranged between 30 and 60 minutes.

In qualitative research, reliability is synonymous with thoroughness, honesty, (Robson, 2002) and consistency (Leung, 2015), while validity refers to the findings' truthfulness (Mohajan, 2018). I enhanced reliability and validity by asking simple-

worded questions in the same order and structure on the paper and maintained a neutral stance throughout each interview. Persons can perceive nonverbal communication (Bambaeeroo & Shokrpour, 2017) and I ensured that my body language did not affect the responses of the participants. In pursuit of truthfulness, I did not agree or disagree with the participants, but focused on participant validation and verified the accuracy of my interpretation of the participants' responses. Trustworthiness in qualitative research means that the study is credible. Trustworthiness is a bedrock component of superb qualitative research (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). In order to augment validity, I thoroughly examined company documents to find evidence substantiating engagement efforts of media leaders.

Data Collection Technique

An interview consists of an opening, middle, and end that can be flawed if the researcher fails to prepare (Trochim et al., 2016). The quality of the collected data depends on my preparation. This process of preparation includes establishing an effective data collection plan that involves researching updated information on how to conduct semistructured interviews. I followed recommendations from experts. For example, Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, and Kangasniemi (2016) suggested that researchers identify the prerequisites for semistructured interviews, use previous knowledge, and create an interview guide. After I was granted permission to research the media agency, a manager at the media agency gave me the cell numbers and email addresses of five leaders who were successful with employee engagement initiatives. I contacted the five leaders via phone and email and told them about the purpose and nature of my study, as well as their

right to withdraw at any time. In an effort not to jeopardize the research and obtain truthful answers, no incentives were given or promised to the leaders. The leaders selected an appropriate time and place for the interview to be conducted on the jobsite and signed an informed consent form several days before the interviews started.

Although the accuracy of semistructured interviews may not equate with direct measurements, researchers can still gain valuable insights (O’Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozović, & Sinha, 2016). Semistructured interviews are not only a dominant data collection qualitative method, but also appropriate for qualitative studies (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; Alshenqeeti, 2014). Semistructured interviews are usually conducted once (Jamshed, 2014) and I conducted the interviews one time in person with each participant. Despite the high level of interviewer bias in face to face interviews, researchers get the opportunity to observe participants closely and use appropriate nonverbal communication behavior (Neuman, 2011). For example, I observed and recorded contextual information that would have been missed had I conducted the interview over the phone.

In the initial stage of the interview, I introduced myself to the participant, stated my student status at Walden University, explained the purpose of the study and format of the interview, and reminded participants that their responses will be confidential. The interviewer is responsible for allaying any lingering insecurities (Saunders et al., 2015). As exemplified in the interview protocol (see Appendix B) which I followed, I reminded the participants that I will be using digital recorders during the interview, emphasized the importance of capturing their words accurately, and asked them once again if they approved or objected to the recording. The presence of an active recorder may change the

interviewer's behavior (McGonagle, Brown, & Schoeni, 2015), but a researcher will have more time to focus on the responses of participants, prompt appropriately, and create accurate interview transcripts (Jamshed, 2014).

Once the participants approved the digital recording, I proceeded with the interview, asked warm-up questions, and inquired about the participant's name, position, job description, and organizational tenure. The questions were necessary to create a comfortable, interview-friendly climate that encouraged the participants to express themselves freely. Doody and Noonan (2013) indicated that participants give honest answers when interviewers establish rapport and make them feel relaxed.

After the warm-up session, I asked the nine core open ended questions and prompted the participants for an example or asked them to elaborate when I need clarification. Participants were given sufficient time to talk extensively as I grasped on to every word as if it were life-saving information. Despite being time consuming and costly, the flexibility of semistructured interviews enables researchers to ask additional unscripted questions and acquire more data (Young et al., 2018). I wrote some pertinent information occasionally because I did not want to distract the respondent. Doody and Noonan (2013) approved note-taking but insisted that the means by which the interviewer takes the notes could be distracting. Frequent note-taking can result in participant disengagement. To ensure that there was no misunderstanding, I verified the accuracy of my notes with the participants immediately after the interview and sent participants the interview transcript via email the same week I conducted the interview.

I also requested and reviewed the organization's documents that highlighted the engagement efforts of leaders over the years. A review of the documents is a form of triangulation, which is necessary in qualitative research. The researcher solidified credibility and the authenticity of the findings through triangulation (Chowdhury, 2015). The literature on engagement was also used to substantiate the findings of this study.

Data Organization Technique

Qualitative research is synonymous with in-depth data unlike its antithesis, quantitative research, which is limited to how much and how many, qualitative research is all about scope and depth (Zamawe, 2015). One software that can secure, organize, and help analyze the data, as well as create easy access when needed is NVivo 12 Plus software. NVivo 12 Plus is the most recent version of NVivo, and unlike Atlas and other software, I find NVivo to be more user friendly and contains advanced features that enable rapid coding. NVivo is a vital multimedia tool for researchers because of its efficiency, transparency, and ability to accommodate a large quantity of data (Dollah, Abduh, & Rosmaladewi, 2017). NVivo 12 Plus was used to manage the study's data, including audio files and research documents. I labelled and logged each interview file into the system in a manner that maintains confidentiality: P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. The participant was distinguished from the interviewer in the transcribed interview word-processed document. The time saving technology NVivo 12 Plus made it easier to find themes quickly and classify data effectively. Transcripts and audio files were coded with NVivo 12 Plus, which sped up the coding process and resulted in a better-finished research product. Researchers who are unfamiliar with NVivo are advised to seek

guidance from experienced NVivo users (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Because I am not adept at using NVivo, I got professional help to minimize errors.

I scanned, labelled, and saved company documents such as evaluations electronically. I also create a reflective journal. Sutton and Austin (2015) noted that qualitative work necessitates reflection before, during, and after research. The journal was used to solidify my thoughts, register biases, and better analyze the current study. I also secured confidential data during the course of the study. Data should be stored in a secured area for 5 years (Fusch & Ness, 2015). As a means of added protection, the study's electronic data files were encrypted. The data will be deleted permanently when the 5 years expire.

Data Analysis

Despite the in depth benefits of qualitative research, analyzing the data is a laborious activity, which exceeds the requirements of quantitative analysis (Watkins, 2017). The researcher is responsible for ensuring that the procedures used during the critical stage of data analysis, address the research question (Blanca, Alarcón, & Bono, 2018). I enhanced the quality and confidence of the findings via data triangulation by conducting semistructured interviews, member checking, and examining the organization's documents. After I transcribed the interviews, each file was saved separately. I also analyzed the verbatim scripts, manually noted the various themes of the motivational strategies media leaders use to bolster employee engagement, and manually examined company documents. A thematic analysis was also conducted via the NVivo 12

Plus software, which is used to manage all of the study's data, including audio files and research documents.

A thematic analysis comprises a back-and-forth process of reading the data, coding, probing for, reviewing, and analyzing themes, as well as providing a synopsis of the findings (Wang, Wang, & Khalil, 2018). As I studied the data, I actively and continuously engaged in the six processes of thematic analysis until no new themes emerged. Saunders et al.'s (2015) guidelines for conducting an effective thematic analysis entails becoming familiar with the data, coding, searching for and identifying thematic relationships, and refining themes. A lot of data on engagement strategies resulted via data analysis procedures. The analysis of the data is very useful in corroborating the theories of this study's conceptual framework: Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT, and Kahn's (1990) employee engagement. I continued to analyze the data by perusing contemporary literature, looking for similarities or differences in themes and the latest theories on employee engagement.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

All studies have limitations (Olu-Daniels, 2017), including qualitative research that are criticized for a lack of rigor (Noble & Smith, 2015). I followed various data procedures to augment reliability and validity. Reliability and validity enhanced transparency and mitigated against researcher bias (Mohajan, 2018). Reliability means consistency and care (Cypress, 2017), as well as dependability (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016).

Dependability. Dependability is important to the qualitative researcher who wants to enhance transparency and ensure that readers understand the research procedures (Moon et al., 2016). I assured dependability by acquiring interview data from media leaders who were knowledgeable about employee engagement strategies and implemented these strategies successfully over the years. I also created a semistructured interview guide and ask questions methodically to each participant. Veteran research tutors and practitioners, who provided sound advice regarding the construction of interview questions, reviewed the questions.

The revision of the interview guide through another lens eliminated unsuspecting bias, such as leading questions. Feedback fortifies robust research (Smith & Noble, 2017) and I continued to reflect on potential and existing biases throughout the study in an effort to minimize bias. Reducing bias as much as possible is vital because bias negatively affects reliability and validity and can lead to flawed research (Smith & Noble, 2017). I increased reliability by being vigilant and thorough during each stage of the research. Member checking is an important aspect of reliability in qualitative research that also heightens validity (Birt et al., 2016). I followed the interview protocol and allowed the participants to verify my interpretation of their responses after the interview. The participants received my interpretation of their responses via email, during the same week the interview was conducted. The participants were also given one week to peruse and critique the interpretations.

Validity

Validity means trustworthiness (Elo et al., 2014). Validity is also associated with integrity, which refers to the methods the researcher uses to present the data accurately (Noble & Smith, 2015) or the appropriateness of the methods (Leung, 2015).

Additionally, validity entails three critical elements that sometimes overlap with dependability and are considered the benchmark of good qualitative research: credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility. Credibility is one feature of good qualitative research. Credibility is tantamount to confidence in the researcher's findings and conclusions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In an effort to strengthen credibility, I treated all participants fairly, paid keen attention to their responses, and probed when necessary. Additionally, I wrote brief notes during the interviews and audio-recorded all interviews with the permission of participants. Although some researchers purported that the pen-and-paper recorded interview is ideal, unlike the audio-recorded interview (Trochim et al., 2016), other researchers believe that the recording is necessary because the transcript should not be paraphrased (Mabuza, Govender, Ogunbanjo, & Mash, 2014). Recording lessens participant distraction, ensures no salient point is missed, and leads to sound findings and conclusions, which are integrally linked, trustworthy, and valid (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). The findings in the current study were confirmed because I left a trail of tangible evidence that increases validity and reliability. Credibility is an important feature of validity, which is closely related to dependability and involves member checking and method triangulation (Moon et al., 2016). During the interview, I wrote some responses

of the participants' and at the end of the interview, shared the notes with participants who determined if their words and experiences were captured accurately on paper. In the post-interview stage, participants were furnished with my interpretations of their responses. I requested participants' feedback of the document to remove any ambiguity that might persist. Respondent validation solidifies data consistency and transparency (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Data triangulation was undertaken to boost the validity of the study. Qualitative researchers use at least one triangulation method to diminish bias (Anney, 2014). Triangulation allows the researcher to provide a comprehensive analysis of the issue under investigation (Mabuza et al., 2014). Triangulation was achieved by examining company documents relating to employee engagement, the responses of participants during the semistructured interviews, as well as past and current literature on engagement. I also achieved triangulation once the literature on engagement supported the research findings and conclusions. The literature can be used to corroborate or challenge the research findings and generate more knowledge on the subject matter (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

Transferability. Transferability is an important aspect of validity, which can be achieved once the researcher provides a rich description of the study's context and assumptions (Trochim et al., 2016). I thoroughly described the setting, sample selection, design, and data collection process of the study. The description of the context, sample, and methods of data collection augments credibility (Hadi, 2016). Through transferability, researchers can determine the study's applicability to similar contexts

(Moon et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2015). I stated that the study can be generalized to other settings and compared to other studies on employee engagement.

Confirmability. As the word indicates, confirmability is synonymous with corroboration. Researchers must exhibit logical procedures that highlight a nexus between the study's results and conclusions (Moon et al., 2016). I documented every decision regarding the research methods, process, assumptions, and biases. The audit trail bolsters trustworthiness, establishes transparency, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Confirmability is evident amid triangulation (Chowdhury, 2015). I enhanced the study's trustworthiness by reviewing company documents and implemented other forms of data triangulation such as interviews and respondent validation. I also asked questions in the same order during the semistructured interviews, and made notes of each participant's nonverbal communication.

Data Saturation. Data saturation means that no new information is available for the researcher to collect (Saunders et al., 2018). I examined documents that substantiate motivational strategies the leaders use to enhance workers' performance. Olu-Daniels (2017) recommended that researchers move towards triangulation. Triangulation counteracts bias, realizes data saturation, and adds in-depth data (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). I used the NVivo 12 Plus software to identify trends, patterns, and themes after multiple phases of scrutiny. When no new coding, themes, and data emerge, I was satisfied with the level of data saturation. Validity is about accuracy and Yin (2018) advised that the researcher uses triangulation to ensure that the participants' multiple realities are captured truthfully. Researchers can use this study in the future to do a

comparative analysis and substantiate causes of employee engagement in another context. I also provided adequate data from the literature to show that the drivers of employee engagement are universal and not limited to the media station.

Transition and Summary

Conducting research is a multifaceted process, which should begin with the awareness of the researcher's role and includes protecting participants and reporting their perspectives truthfully. I conformed to other ethical conditions that enhanced the study's reliability and validity—critical components of good research. Data collection and data analysis are also critical stages of the research process that necessitate the right instruments and critical thinking skills to be of any significance. Once the research process is executed effectively, the study can include valuable insights into the strategies media leaders use to increase employee engagement.

Section 3 began with the first sentence in the purpose of the study, along with a summary of the research findings. I outlined major themes that answered the overarching research question, aligned with the conceptual framework, and used contemporary literature to validate the findings and point out areas of contention. The other subheading application to business practice followed and I gave an explanation on how the study can improve organizations with disengaged employees. I also discussed the implications for social change, recommendations for action and future research before reflecting and concluding. The research ended with several pages of references and various documents that are located in the Appendices.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the motivational strategies some media leaders use to keep employees engaged. The findings of this doctoral study were based on data collected from five face-to-face, semistructured interviews with various media leaders and documents from the media entity. Three main themes and drivers of employee engagement emerged during the analysis of data: flexible leadership, training, and recognition and appreciation.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was: What motivational strategies do some media leaders use to keep employees engaged? The interview questions comprised 9 core, open-ended questions, but I was able to probe and obtain clarification for vague responses during all sessions. Each interview was conducted in a private office in the organization and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. I transcribed the interviews and sent copies to participants to verify the accuracy of their responses. No participant expressed that there was any misinterpretation. To maintain the confidentiality agreement outlined in the informed consent form, I did not reveal the names or gender of the media leaders. Instead, I labelled the leaders as either P1, P2, P3, P4, or P5.

I also used the NVivo software to narrow down themes after I manually coded the transcripts. The findings aligned with the conceptual framework on employee engagement, which Kahn (1990), Deci and Ryan (1985), and Maslow (1943) aptly elucidated. Because the theories of personal engagement, self-determination, and

hierarchy of needs are transcendent and universal, I used them to explain the occurrences in the contemporary media setting. The findings were also supported with existing literature on employee engagement.

Theme 1: Flexible Leadership

Flexible leadership is tantamount to situational leadership, which is the ability to respond appropriately to diverse circumstances using directive and supportive tactics to accomplish organizational goals. Although media leaders did not label themselves as a situational leader, the characteristics of their management style were inescapably in sync with the theory of Hersey and Blanchard (1969). P1, P2, P3, and P4 emphasized that the nature of media industry necessitates some level of flexibility. In line with the situational theory that accentuates the need for leaders to be cognizant of employees' personalities (Sadique & Shaikh, 2019), P1 and P2 explained that knowledge of workers' socioeconomic background empowered them to make well-informed decisions. P2 posited that one must not equate the acquisition of employee information to prying into their personal business, but there were "certain general things" that need to be considered, such as the single parent status of employees. P2 added that people may perceive the leader as "soft," but there were times when adjustment was necessary.

The flexible leadership of P1 and P2 enabled them to approach employees differently and cater to their diverse needs. The supportive work climate also enhances engagement (Koon & Chong, 2018) because workers were willing to reciprocate favorably to the organization. Rigid management impacts employee engagement negatively, as P1, P2, and P3 indicated. P1 and P3 identified this rigid, authoritarian style

as the least effective motivational strategy, which had resulted in some “pushback”, according to P1. The human element of leadership is critical to employee engagement and it involved the use of soft skills. Soft skills encompass emotional and moral, as well as social aptitudes (Manullang, 2017) that can be used strategically to achieve the vision of the establishment. For example, P3 suggested that sometimes one has to be willing to “give and take a little.” P3 did not demand that employees arrive at and leave work at a specific time, especially when they would have injected a substantial amount of effort into organizational development. P2, who also alluded to this level of flexibility, postulated that while some employees may be late, consideration must be given to those who volunteered their labor beyond the lawfully stipulated 8 hours. P2 was adamant that being “hard and fast” would not work in a flexible environment like the media. In accordance with this study’s conceptual theory on employee engagement, Kahn (1990) underscored the significance of psychological safety that entails working without fear or repercussions under a supportive management in an enabling environment.

Psychological safety does not mean that superiors must consistently excuse workers who do not adhere to company rules and regulations. It means that management, as P2 insisted, must not be quick to act, but should weigh the situation, and compromise when necessary. The bottom line, according to P2 was to get the job done. While soft skills are essential, they are inadequate for the day-to-day operations of any business. Soft skills complement hard skills that are more task-oriented and enable individuals to deal with changing dynamics (Cimatti, 2016). Getting the job done also means that flexible leaders must sometimes be firm with employees. P2 mentioned that while some

employees handled criticism well, others “go into a shell” when they are reprimanded. In such a situation, P2 treaded carefully until the workers re-engaged. P2 described individuals who were serious about media as “career people.” According to P2, there was less resistance from the career people than those who were merely looking for a job because career people recognized the importance of shift schedules and were willing to fit into the flexible media environment. Flexible leadership does not mean everyone will buy-in, but in the quest for consistent excellence, P4 emphasized the need for punctuality, continuous training and improvement, and communication.

P5 suggested that punishment was the least effective engagement strategy. Despite engagement efforts, P5 found that a small percentage of employees never engaged and those who did were stimulated temporarily by the presence of millennials, whom P5 referred to as “fresh blood.” The presence of millennials, according to P5, created a kind of jealousy in a few of the older staff and forced them to be competitive and engaged for a time. The millennials, on the other hand, were engaged by technology and despite financial restrictions and a lack of resources, P5 capitalized on their interest and put them to work with the technology to bolster productivity. This strategy fits with the research. Millennials tend to be more at ease with computer devices because of the technological era in which they were born (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008).

Meaningful engagement and psychological safety emerge when employees are also challenged and feel a sense of control over their work (Kahn, 1990). P5 found that challenging work motivated employees who yearned for knowledge, wanted to get away from routine, and be fulfilled. Thus, P5 instilled in employees a sense of ownership of

their work. That sense of ownership is equivalent to autonomy that Deci and Ryan (1985) described in SDT, which also forms part of this study's conceptual framework.

Autonomy is an innate need to exert control over an individual's own actions (Wang, Liu, Kee, & Chian, 2019) and a major characteristic of flexible leaders is their ability to foster autonomy. When leaders give employees autonomy, intrinsic motivation and engagement develop, contrary to situations where micromanagement and authoritarianism were rife.

P1 argued that the micromanagement of the upper echelon of the media agency undermined productivity and increased conflict. P1 deemed micromanagement and "I am the boss" mentality to be an anti-progressive strategy, but was able to keep the team engaged through a flexible style of management that coincided with autonomy and a sense of trust, which made work more meaningful for employees.

The leaders at the media house also augmented employee engagement by promoting teamwork and creativity, as well as building personal relationships with employees. P1 and P3 identified teamwork as the most effective strategy for engagement, while P5 alluded to its significance in organizational development. P1, P3, and P5 managed by treating employees fairly, engaging continuously in positive dialogue, and reiterating the value of the symbiotic relationship they share. Rather than creating a hierarchical divide, P1, P3 and P5 used teamwork to enhance productivity. Teamwork is beneficial because members tend to have more autonomy when the direct locus of control shifts from management to members (By, Kuipers, & Procter, 2018). Teamwork also strengthens group identification (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Group identification is intertwined into Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Group identification refers to

belongingness and is directly correlated to satisfaction with life (Wakefield et al., 2017).

Group identification fulfills social needs and enables humans to make meaningful contributions and co-exist harmoniously (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). P3 compared the team's cohesiveness to "gel." P3 added that the workers bonded harmoniously on projects as they created something new, which resulted in job satisfaction and positive feedback from the public.

Media is a creative field and P2 emphasized that employees were also given the freedom to be creative. P2 added that if this freedom were withdrawn and the manager tried to keep them in a "strait jacket", the leader will get a lot of pushback. P1, P2, P3, and P5 created an environment that generated creativity directly and indirectly among employees. Creative leadership is pivotal because it can result in a competitive advantage (Randel & Jaussi, 2019), differentiating the organization from others. Flexible leaders are not only creative, but also strategic. The findings of this study substantiated the findings in the literature on flexible work environment, which overlapped with a variety of leadership styles such as: transformational, authentic, and situational leadership.

Theme 2: Organizational Training

Training is a critical employee engagement strategy that proved successful for media leaders in Antigua and Barbuda. P2, P3, P4, and P5 explained that training was a continuous process, which was conducted locally, regionally, and internationally. P5, however noted that some employees did not get in-depth training for their positions. Because business success is dependent on employees' performance, training and development programs should be continuous to build workers' performance and

proficiency (Karim, Choudhury, & Latif, 2019). Ongoing training is equally important to all, newcomers and longstanding employees alike (Zahra et al., 2014). The review of the literature also indicated that training is a predominant, global method, which intensifies productivity and employee retention (Siddiqui, 2019). As the conceptual framework accentuated, psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability are three conditions that cultivate employee engagement (Kahn, 1990), and work cannot be worthwhile if employees lack the resources that would make them proficient. P4 highlighted that the leadership is keen on developing the human capital and tried to match the training opportunities with organizational gaps. P4 added that training, which was across the board, helped with consistency and efficiency. The capabilities or quality of the human capital plays a vital role in organizational outcomes (Cimatti, 2016).

P2 emphasized that training was vital because not everyone who comes into media is passionate about broadcasting. P2 pointed out that working in the field of broadcasting necessitated a lot of sacrifice and for the unskilled employees, the media can be very challenging. Besides trying to get the unenthusiastic workers to buy into the organization's vision, P2 encouraged employees to participate in overseas engagement training programs. P2 and P3 noted that many employees looked forward to overseas training. P2 said external training takes them out of their comfort zone with no financial losses, while P3 asserted that training entailed an element of excitement and surprise as employees were glad for the opportunity to learn and implement new strategies to enhance their work. The literature on employee engagement shows that there is a significant correlation between training and employee performance (Sendawula, Kimuli,

Bananuka, & Munganga, 2018). Training remains necessary because experts' capabilities can foster employee professionalism (Harris, & Clayton, 2018). Training should result in increased knowledge and skills, which should translate into heightened performance (Siddiqui, 2019).

Training was also used like an antidote for employees with low evaluation scores. P3 said that quarterly evaluations were conducted and in cases where employees were deficient, they trained and gave them tips to improve their performance. Evaluations, according to P3, were not used as a reason for punishment, but rather as a helping tool. The organization's employee performance and development review measured areas such as job knowledge, initiative, attitude, quantity and quality of work, as well as time management and work ethic. P3 indicated that sometimes a small percentage of employees was resistant to evaluations because of the low scores they received, but leaders continued to train them to enhance their skills. P3 indicated that training helped because some employees with limited skillset were underutilized, but once trained, they became more useful and engaged.

Based on the SDT conceptual framework, one inherent driver of motivation is competence, which is synonymous with effectivity. Increasing employee competence results in lasting intrinsic engagement and employee well-being, and can be strengthened via training (Koole et al., 2018). The findings of this study are in line with the existing literature on training. Training and development help to maximize employee utilization and productivity (Vinesh, 2014) and also enable individuals to exploit their skills and talents and self-actualize. As the hierarchy of needs conceptual framework highlighted,

individuals cannot self-actualize if their physiological, safety, social, and esteem needs are unfulfilled (Maslow, 1943). Training should be a basic requirement for all organizations. Training results in organizational commitment and employee empowerment (Hanaysha, 2016).

Success stories about employee engagement coincided with a restructuring of the media entity. It is important that employees are not only adequately trained, but also strategically placed in the workplace. Information from the organization revealed that several positions were created; some employees were transferred and some resigned, as new workers were hired. Training, largely in-house, also intensified and was buttressed by numerous tips media leaders shared with subordinates and the efforts of local, regional, and international specialists, who participated in various training programs. The review of the literature showed that in-house training is more advantageous and economical (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013) and has a positive effect on employee productivity (Van Zyl, 2017). Training, in general, also improves organizational image (Vinesh, 2014). The restructuring of the media agency was met with staunch resistance from employees who were accustomed to the old work regime, but within a few years, the public lauded the media entity for new programs and professional presentation of the news. The organization was also awarded for its contribution to broadcasting.

Theme 3: Recognition and Appreciation

While it is true that motivation varies (Delaney & Royal, 2017), the majority of media leaders (P1, P3, P4, and P5) identified public recognition and appreciation as an effective employee engagement strategy. Recognition is the acknowledgement of

employees' efforts and appreciation is a basic human requirement (Alam, Saeed, Sahabuddin, & Akter, 2013). Recognition and appreciation are major antecedents of employee engagement (Abdullah, Shonubi, Hashim, & Hamid, 2016; Saks, 2019). P1 indicated that in the past, employee morale was extremely low and the turnover rate was high; many employees felt ostracized because of a lack of organizational appreciation. P1 equated the feelings of employees to that of an outcast but combatted employee despondency by being optimistic and recognizing publicly the discretionary efforts of workers. P1 asserted that employee recognition and appreciation was the most effective engagement strategy. As indicated in this study's conceptual framework on engagement, employees are likely to see their work as meaningful and become engaged if they believe that they are contributing to organizational development (Kahn, 1990). P1 expressed appreciation in cost effective ways, such as treating devoted employees to a night out or funding the cost for simple social events. P3 confirmed that social events kept employees engaged, but so too did structured recognition programs like end of year awards, which were given to individuals from various departments, as well as those who were never sick or who had a great attendance record.

Although psychological relatedness is the least discussed need in past literature on SDT (Wang et al., 2019), it remains a fundamental element of this study's conceptual framework. Making workers aware of their value is essential; appreciation and recognition bolster employee performance and organizational success (Abdullah et al., 2016). In the workplace, relatedness augments a social and psychological sense of belonging that are critical to engagement. P5 highlighted that praising employees was the

most effective engagement strategy because it gave them the recognition that they were being helpful or were contributing to the development of the organization. P5 insisted that it is important employees realize that they, like management, play an integral role in the institution's growth. Likewise, P1 underscored the importance of magnifying the arduous efforts of employees and telling them earnestly that they are a special part of the organization. Being earnest is critical. White (2014) stated that rather than the usual protocol, the recognition must be authentic so that it can be effective and valued by each employee. Social conditions can determine an individual's level of engagement and the fulfilment of certain general needs are prerequisites for psychological well-being (Migliorini, Cardinali, & Rania, 2019).

Employee recognition also coincides with increased self-esteem and is most effective when the following conditions exist: a robust organizational support, psychological understanding of lauding workers' performance, and the application of employee recognition principles (Amoatema & Kyeremeh, 2016). As highlighted in the conceptual framework, esteem is a higher order need in Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation. Esteem can be classified as self-esteem (internal) and the esteem people get from others (external), which involves recognition and respect (Shahrawat & Shahrawat, 2017). P1 contended that no one wants to feel like he or she is working in vain in any establishment, and despite people's intrinsic passion to work hard, sustainability becomes problematic when there is little or no emphasis on recognizing and appreciating employees. Recognition augments job security and employee responsibility

(Zeb, Abdullah, Javaid, & Khan, 2017). Maslow (1943) identified safety, which incorporates security of employment, as an important human need.

While praise and public recognition are significant factors of employee engagement, the desire to move to the next level is also vital because monotony can suppress engagement. Employee attachment occurs mentally when workers acknowledge that upward mobility is possible in an organization (Ahmed, Ahmad, & Jaaffar, 2017), and P4 believed that promotions are the ultimate reward of appreciation for consistently good work. An extrinsic reward like promotions, lead to increased proficiency, especially when salary serves as a yardstick for employees' organizational value (Asaari, Desa, & Subramaniam, 2019). P4 explained that the promotion, which is tied to increased remuneration, did not only have a positive effect on the rewarded employees who continued to strive for excellence, but also on their colleagues who buy-in to the vision and became motivated as a result. The findings are in accordance with Kahn's (1990) engagement theory; work becomes more meaningful for employees when management show recognition and appreciation.

Superb management is synonymous with superb employee performance (Medlin & Green, 2014) and effective leaders recognized that although promotions and money can improve employee performance, the needs of the workforce remains diverse. Through simple praise and recognition P1, P3, P4, and P5 motivated employees despite challenges such as low morale, lack of financial resources, and consistency of effort. Increased morale and productivity, as well as a changed atmosphere were attained as a result of the inexpensive engagement strategy. P1 and P3 stated that employees within the

department became a very tight-knit group and were willing to work extra hours. The findings of this study corroborated the information in existing literature that underscored the significance of non-financial, extrinsic drivers of employee engagement.

Applications to Professional Practice

Employee engagement is critical to business survival, and if the ultimate aim of a business is to make a profit, leaders must pay close attention to the factors that stimulate discretionary effort. The findings of this case study highlighted the urgent need for leaders to exercise flexibility on the job. Because employees spend a substantial amount of time in the workplace (Bartels, Peterson, & Reina, 2019), business leaders should care about their well-being. The leaders of the media agency recognized that 21st century employees are diverse and engagement thrives on their need to feel valued for their contribution. Business leaders must not focus only on the product, but also on the process of achieving organizational goals.

To determine the needs of employees, it is imperative that leaders strengthen communication by listening keenly to their subordinates, including those who seem impossible to engage, according to the findings. Listening is a fundamental communication skill that fosters understanding, learning, and success (Manzouri, Shahraki, & Fatemi, 2016; Nagendra, 2014). Listening requires hard work and intricate skills that must be nurtured (Okwuchukwu, 2016). Whereas listening is sometimes mistaken for the physiological act of hearing, Arnold (2014) asserted that listening entails other comprehension skills that involve reading non-verbal communication, such as the tone, gestures, and inflection of the speaker. Leaders must develop the habit of listening

to all employees when verbal communication is lacking. Asemota (2015) identified four types of listening and listeners: active (quick learners), appreciative (sensitive and understanding), quite the opposite of partial listeners who focus on counteracting the speaker, and intermittent listeners who pretend to listen. Good communication is tantamount to good listening and leaders desirous of solving contemporary business problems must be effective listeners (Cacciattolo, 2015). Leaders must also be able to identify their weaknesses and work towards improving their flaws.

Although employee engagement is the key to corporate competitiveness, it remains a critical area of concern (Singh, 2016). Engaged employees are directly linked to the materialization of organizational goals, but a two-way employer-employee communication system must first be established prior to engagement (Ikon & Chukwu, 2017). Employees feel valued when their superiors listen to and consider their ideas. This worthwhile feeling of having a stake or input in the organization is priceless and can maintain engagement.

The findings showed that the psychological state of the workplace is pivotal to employee engagement. Employees need to feel like they are a good organizational fit (Lampinen, Konu, Kettunen, & Suutala, 2018) and management should do their best to heighten employee morale and provide them with the necessary training to elevate their confidence. Employees need to be the center of attention in the workplace and the environment should be restructured to meet their needs (Wieneke et al., 2019). Strategic leaders realize that the institutional advancement necessitates a holistic approach, which

involves an effective level of coordination for the success of employee engagement initiatives.

Implications for Social Change

Low employee engagement is a disturbing universal problem that will likely result in diminished performance (Motyka, 2018). Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and productivity (Choudhury & Mohanty, 2018; Khalaf, et al., 2019; Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Productivity is important because it is directly linked to organizational profitability and longevity. Failure to keep employees engaged have resulted in losses that exceed \$500 billion annually (Rastogi et al., 2018). Contrastingly, the greater the level of employee engagement, the greater the potential that business owners will surpass average revenue expectations (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Although it may sound cliché that employees are the most vital assets of any institution, it is a reality. Because employee engagement coincides with job satisfaction, the efforts of employees must not be downplayed or taken for granted.

Employees who experience job satisfaction are happier than their disengaged counterparts. When leaders engage employees, increased efficiency, morale, loyalty, and customer satisfaction are the end results (Sharma & Sharma, 2014). Engaged employees also produce better products and deliver quality service, which in turn generate contentment among customers. The happy effect of employee engagement also transcends business establishments into the homes of workers. Ilies, Liu, Liu, and Zheng (2017) found that job engagement correlated with family satisfaction.

Retention rates are also higher among engaged employees (Allam, 2017; Sharma & Sharma, 2014). High retention rates do not only make organizations more attractable, but they also translate into organizational savings and stability because it is expensive to replace employees (Mitrovska & Eftimov, 2016). Employee engagement and productivity may also have a positive impact on the socioeconomic development of a nation (Sarangi & Nayak, 2016) because profitable businesses contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Engaged employees also position organizational leaders to mitigate against globally competitive forces that threaten business sustainability (Vorina, Simonič, & Vlasova, 2017).

Recommendations for Action

Based on the findings of this case study, training played a fundamental role in employee engagement initiatives, but all employees did not receive in-depth training at the media agency. I would recommend that leaders put measures in place to ensure that all employees are trained effectively. Leaders must also introduce development programs to strengthen employees' critical thinking skills and ready them for upward mobility (Gupta & Sharma, 2018). The more training and development programs employees are exposed to, the more likely they will exceed expectations. Training is essential because it develops employee confidence, self-efficacy, and commitment (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

If leaders want to keep employee engagement high on their agenda, they must make it a habit of recognizing and appreciating their hard work. A paycheck can no longer be the only motivating force. Authoritative figures who refuse to recognize and support employees' efforts will lower morale, productivity, and creativity (Asaari, et al.,

2019). Business leaders can reward employees for outstanding work and encourage workers who are not yet up to par. Some managers make a grave mistake by acknowledging only employees who are prolific. Struggling employees must also be stimulated for small achievements and general effort. Scaffolding employees to that zone of proximal development is important for the development of any institution.

Leaders should also be well-informed about the various leadership styles that are appropriate for employee engagement. Situational leadership is appropriate because it incorporates other styles of leadership (democratic, laissez faire, and autocratic) that can address organizational issues. The findings show that media leaders use all of these styles to maximize employee productivity, but transformational leadership may also be suitable. Transformational leaders are effective because they align employees' personal needs with organizational goals and instill a consciousness within subordinates that they are valuable assets (Jones & George, 2017). Transformational leaders also exercise flexibility; they realize that employees are not a means to an end, but human beings who have a life outside of the work, which may sometimes conflict with job requirements. Successful leaders are cognizant that employee well-being is vital to business survival, so they try to make the business place as comfortable as possible to realize the organization's vision.

Another recommendation that leaders need to consider is the timing of feedback and the manner in which it is delivered. For instance, employees who receive low evaluation scores may directly or indirectly show their disapproval. Sometimes, the feedback is given after a long period of observation or once per year. Leaders need to work closely with employees, communicate their expectations, and provide feedback

frequently (Sharma & Sharma, 2014). Feedback is not only indicative of employee performance, but is also critical to their development. Based on the findings, some employees did not handle feedback well and isolated themselves. Leaders should deliver the feedback professionally and constructively, and listen to the employees' response or request that they express how they feel about the feedback (Prayson & Rowe, 2017).

The onus is also on the upper echelon of establishments to positively engage leaders who are tasked with employee engagement initiatives. If leaders are stressed, for example, being micromanaged, it may hinder engagement efforts. Leaders who are not engaged may experience difficulties keeping other engaged. The needs of employees are not different from the needs of leaders. In his hierarchy of needs, Maslow (1943) indicated that physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization are fundamental needs of mankind.

The results of this study can be shared at conferences aimed at developing and implementing best business practices in various organizations. Management students at colleges and universities may also appreciate the findings as they conduct research on contemporary organizational problems. As a former media practitioner, the results can be discussed during training sessions with media leaders who are embarking on employee engagement programs. The information in this research study may also be disseminated via a journal. The aim is to convert this doctoral study in a journal article so that the information could be accessed easily by multitudes of people who are interested in employee engagement.

Recommendations for Further Research

One limitation of this study was that I focused on a single organization, which may make it difficult to generalize. I recommend that a comparative research should be conducted on media organizations to highlight the similarities and differences of engagement strategies, as well their effectiveness in Antigua and Barbuda. This comparative analysis would be very useful for generalization purposes.

Another limitation was the use of purposive sampling. Rather than targeting media leaders who have been successful with employee engagement, I recommend that in the future, the researcher chooses a sample of leaders randomly. The population would comprise all leaders, including those who have been unsuccessful with employee engagement. This would allow the researcher to get a holistic picture of organizational practices.

Additionally, I recommend that the researcher investigate the effects of employee engagement on employees at the media agency to determine if they align with the perspectives of the leaders. Interviews should be used to get an in-depth view of the phenomenon and to examine the veracity of leaders' perceptions. Future research could also indicate the impact of engagement strategies on gender. The findings of this study can be used to conduct further robust research and enlighten all about the important role of strategic leadership in driving employee engagement.

Reflections

This doctoral journey has been quite exhausting, but extremely fulfilling. It is not easy being a mother, wife, educator, and student. The obligations of each of these roles

were overwhelming at times, but somehow I managed. This doctoral study has taken a psychological, social, and economic toll on my family, but I believe that every penny was well spent. I decided to take on this mammoth, academic task because I believe it could help me reach that level of self-actualization, which is priceless. When I began my studies in 2017, I thought there was not much to learn and would have already done something similar with my MBA. Now, I recognize that the gap between my MBA and DBA is much wider than I initially thought.

This DBA experience has been interesting for me because there were many things I needed to learn, especially about the doctoral research process, and with utmost thanks to the staff at Walden, I now have a fairly good understanding of the intricacies involved in research. I realize that it is okay to have personal biases and more importantly, acknowledge that they exist. In the past, I associated biases solely with weaknesses and felt it was best to keep them hidden. I was enlightened during this doctoral process about the ethical requirements of research, which not only make sense, but help to guarantee the protection of all participants.

It would be remiss to me to end this section without highlighting the impact this process has had on my writing development. I am more cognizant about scholarly writing. Additionally, my research on employee was one of the most profound topics I researched. The plethora of information I garnered and learned enabled me to view the world through different lens and apply engagement strategies to various domains. My interactions with colleagues and students on the job and family discourse within my

home have improved significantly. I must say that the journey was real as it could be and so too was my holistic development.

Conclusion

The successful implementation of employee engagement strategies necessitates calculated leaders who recognize the significance of motivation. While many leaders perceive employees who are intrinsically motivated as ideal, the reality is that mankind does not live in a Utopian society. Motivation is a critical element that drives employee engagement. Regardless of the sex or gender, engagement requires leaders of exceptional fortitude who can create enabling workplace environments that satisfy the diverse needs of employees. A supportive climate will make it possible to align employees' personal goals with organizational goals.

Effective leaders also strive to engage all employees because they are aware that the existence of any weak link is detrimental to team success. Business leaders who are genuinely interested in transforming their organizations must go back to basics and recognize that the development of communication skills is not only a theoretical proposition, but is also paramount to organizational growth. The onus is on 21st century leaders to dialogue with those they lead and equip them with the necessary resources that will build their skills and confidence, as well as position them for upward mobility. Leaders who refuse to act, but reiterate constantly that their subordinates are integral to organizational survival, must understand that lip service is anti-progressive.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

The interview questions are as follows:

1. What motivational strategies do you use to keep employees engaged?
2. How do motivational strategies help to maintain employee engagement at your organization?
3. Based upon your organization's experience, what motivational strategies have been the most effective to keep employees engaged?
4. How do employees respond to the motivational strategies you use to keep them engaged?
5. Based upon your organization's experience, what motivational strategies were least effective to keep employees engaged?
6. What fundamental difficulties did your organization encounter as you implemented motivational strategies to bolster employee engagement?
7. How did your organization address the fundamental challenges to implementing its strategies for employee engagement?
8. Based upon your experience, how have the motivational strategies you use to keep employees engaged increased your organization's performance?
9. What other information can you share about the motivational strategies your organization implemented to enhance employee engagement that we've not already covered?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The following steps comprise the interview protocol:

1. introduce myself and thank the participant for taking part in the study;;
2. state the purpose of the study;
3. verify if the agreement to record the interview remains the same and remind participants of their right to stop the interview and withdraw at any time;
4. explain the interview format;
5. remind participants that their names will remain anonymous and responses confidential;
6. ask questions methodically;
7. probe responses;
8. clarify interviewee's responses;
9. inform the participant that he/she will receive a typed copy of my interpretation of their responses via email; they are free to comment;
10. thank the participant for taking part in the study; and
11. transcribe the interview as soon as possible.